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THE DUBLIN REVIEW

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This issue includes:

Cardinal MacRory

SHANE LESLIE

**The Problem of Supernatural
Knowledge**

ILLTYD TRETHOWAN

The Claims of Basic English

E. W. F. TOMLIN

**Political Catholicism in
Germany**

E. M. VERMEHREN

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The Dublin Review

JANUARY, 1946

No. 436

CARDINAL MACRORY

WHEN Cardinal MacRory, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, celebrated his Diamond Jubilee as a Priest on 13 September of last year, few would have guessed—no one present would have dreamed—that so robust-looking a Prelate, so magnificent a figure of an Irishman, would be lying in state in his own Cathedral in a month's time. And with 13 November his Month's Mind has been celebrated by his devoted Northern Bishops in the presence of the Archbishop of Dublin. Surely the old mediaeval feud between the two Primates has been serenely healed by this double visit of Dublin to Armagh.

There was a time when Ireland felt divided between the claims of rival Primates; but today all that has passed and the division of Ireland may be found on the cruelly wounding line of Partition. It was by this controversy that Cardinal MacRory's whole episcopate was affected and even anguished.

It is too late today to explain why Irish Archbishops so often assume the panoply of politicians. It is better for Englishmen to compare them with the foreign Prelates who have under pressing circumstances undertaken the role of unsubmissive patriotism ascending to the admired standards of Cardinal Mercier in the First Great War.

Cardinal MacRory in his resolute stand against Conscription in Ulster (or Six Counties of Ulster) and in favour of Irish neutrality was no less stubborn, no less conscientious. This may be a hard saying, but it was the man: and strangers may believe he was a hard man. But as Bishop and Primate he had been steadily hammered on the anvil of Belfast Protestantism. No English Catholic has the slightest idea of the vast difference in the life of a Catholic Bishop, north or south of the Boundary.

Well I remember at the beginning of the War the Cardinal saying grimly of the Belfast rulers—"They consider me an outlaw and an outcast, I suppose." Yet he was the spiritual father of one third of the population in the Six Counties. It is generally believed of the Irish that they say one thing and mean another. This is attributed to the social embarrassments caused by the Penal Laws. The Cardinal always spoke in direct reverse of this. His Yea was a heartfelt Yea and his Nay was a thundering Nay. He was outspoken and appreciated others who were outspoken.

He watched Cardinal Hinsley during the War with interest. "He is working for England like a Black" was his admiring comment. I venture to say that if Cardinals Hinsley and MacRory had found themselves in each other's positions they would not have acted otherwise. The Yorkshireman is to the Ulsterman what Hinsley was to MacRory. They were both blunt chips of the old block. Our Irish Cardinal was brought up on a battlefield and he remained on the ramparts till the day of his death. Born in Ballygawley, in County Tyrone, he was a Bishop in Belfast and an Archbishop in Armagh: all on the other side of our Irish "Dixie" line which is as dividing a partition as statesmen have ever drawn from political motives.

Tyrone is an electoral battlefield with a Catholic majority and a gerrymandered Protestant hold upon public offices. Belfast the Cardinal had known blazing with rifles and riots. He saved life after life by his presence or his hospitality. On one occasion he drew a boy from the streets into his College from danger and telephoned to his parents. That night the boy's father was murdered. The Cardinal told me that for a hundred nights running it was a secret where exactly he slept, as it was known he was on the Orange gunmen's list. English Bishops in the safety of their palaces must rub their eyes on reading this. But such was the state of the Diocese of Down and Connor after 1918 and the break-up of the Convention. At the same time no one spoke more graciously or humorously of the Orangemen than the Cardinal. I had once listened for an hour to the recital of his difficulties and of his hopes that Partition could be overcome, and finally his voice softened as he spoke of the Belfast Orangemen, whom at heart he understood and appreciated. Almost he might have said: "Other sheep I have . . ." Certainly he considered himself of their blood and character and they knew him as one of themselves and not a soft Southern Irishman with a winsome brogue covering a variety of meanings. When he spoke he said what he thought, and if there was an invisible flag flying from his Cathedral it bore the sacred words "NO SURRENDER".

He had a delicious humour which he was fond of turning against himself. I remember what fun he made of his own features, which were worthy of a greater artist than he ever secured. They were rough and severe, but the eyes twinkled like a school-boy's. When Derry proposed to receive him with a torchlight procession the Government suppressed the torches as a War measure. The Cardinal took it very drolly. Any personal slight or humiliation amused him; but touch the Faith in its integrity, or the National Unity of Ireland, and he was up like a lion!

The Press of the world and the Empire has summed him up only as an intractable, obstinate Irishman who was more interested in the Irish potato-patch than the tragedy of Europe. They were wrong. He took a greater, if unrecorded, part in the difficulties of our times than imagined.

Never was Ireland in such a predicament: divided, bewildered and cross-currented as she was during the last War. She held her own, but she gave singular and unneutral help to the Allies all the while.

It was the Cardinal's firm hand on the tiller which kept peace on the Border and prevented risings and riots. He said he always expected a pogrom in Belfast, but he would never allow his people to give the provocation. Against Conscription he stood (knowing, of course, that at heart the Belfast men were equally opposed, whatever they said). He grimly described how it would be worked—the Catholics would be brought into rank and file while their political enemies were made officers over them.

He kept the peace while upholding the neutrality of Eire. Irishmen had a right to volunteer, and he spoke with interest of the Shamrock Club in London, where Northern and Southern Irishmen met throughout the War. He kept the peace. As he used to say, "My people know my feelings." That pregnant phrase meant everything. They knew that he was opposed to all physical force, to murder and outrage, by any Irishmen, Catholic or Protestant, and while Conscription was not enforced and neutrality respected, the British Government understood that there would be peace.

His little finger was stronger on the extremists than the whole hand of Parnell. It was Parnell who restrained the Fenians and Cardinal MacRory who held back the I.R.A. But in each case the extremists knew they were being checked by as great an idealist as themselves, albeit a practical idealist.

There was a quieter phase to his life when he was Professor first at Olton, near Birmingham, and later at Maynooth. He was one of the few survivors who remembered Cardinal Newman. It was the Holy Scripture which he professed in his indomitable and inimitable way. Well known are his powerful editions of St. John's Gospel and St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians. Only pupils can testify to his sound learning and loving conservatism. He was what we used to call a "Bible Christian". He believed the Bible was true. Protestants revered him for that. I can recall most thrilling moments with him listening to a sudden outburst on some Scriptural point. The mysterious and the mystic verses had meanings as well as the very figures some-

times given in Scripture, if we could discover them. The numbers given of fish caught or baskets filled had a meaning or else they would not be given. I shall always remember hearing him discuss in moving tones the human pedigree given to Our Lord in the Gospels. I had never realized that far back there was an adultery and a child of sin in the list. In other words, there was a skeleton in the family history; presumably Solomon was the illegitimate son of David by Bathsheba. I shall never forget how serenely and sanely he dealt with it. No wonder he could always hold his class spellbound.

Thirty years in the priesthood and professorate were followed by exactly thirty years in the episcopate. Seventeen years ago he was called to the Chair of St. Patrick, which entailed little less than a patriarchal kingship of Ireland.

He symbolized Irish unity, which had been so rashly and unrighteously divided by Partition. Not that Partition need have been administered unrighteously; but the gerrymandering and embittered workings of political ascendancy called forth his sternest and undeviating diatribe. The Scriptural Professor found himself thrown into the cauldron, where his people looked to him not only for spiritual succour but for practical advice under pogrom and raid. He was their leader and protector, and under his courageous and continuous policy his people held on, often by narrow margins, and the attempts to drive Catholics out of the Six Counties were repelled. Well, Cardinal Mercier was once an academical figure, purely a scholar like Cardinal MacRory. The scholar persisted in him, as he always preferred written to oral evidence. Scholars pointed out that eight centuries back Gelasius MacRory was Archbishop of Armagh.

He was delightfully genial and never pushed himself forward or allowed himself to be extolled. He preferred depreciation. Years ago, when a brilliant Irishman was commended to him for a Bishopric, he simply said: "Isn't he a Bohemian?" His interlocutor could not help chaffing him and saying: "Weren't you a Bohemian yourself in Maynooth?" The Cardinal laughed, taking it rather as a compliment. He was austere and temperate himself, but liked to make others enjoy themselves at his expense. As little he dreamed of the honours of the Cardinalate as of being canonized. He liked people to sit in his room and be happy. His table as a Prince of the Church was worthy of "an old Irish gentleman, one of the olden time".

He accepted the Red Hat at the same time as the present Pope and he carried it to Australia, round the world, with the proud knowledge that the Church of St. Patrick, within the Church of St. Peter, covered the world. He used to chaff the

Roman authorities on the larger number of churches he found everywhere dedicated to the Irish Patriarch compared to the Prince of the Apostles. It was a fair comment to make in Rome and there was no reply! He was always ready to attend big events in English Catholic life, laying the foundation stone at Liverpool.

England may always be grateful for an honest critic and a sound admirer. To the Irish he was their Chariot and their Horseman, their Prophet and Protector. The Bishop of Kilmore poured forth a rhapsody at the Cardinal's Month's Mind based on the text in Ecclesiasticus (xlix, 17): "Joseph was a man, born prince of his brethren, the support of his family, the ruler of his brethren and the stay of his people."

The cardinal virtues were peculiarly his. Justice was his passion and Fortitude his need. As for his Charity, he never asked gratitude or recognition. Let me record that the "Catholic Relief" team working in Europe under the Countess of Antrim from Northern Ireland is entirely due to his patronage and push. He backed, supported and inspired them, and their achievement is his.

He was never ruffled, either by diplomatist, controversialist or the mob. As the Bishop of Kilmore said: "He was always his own natural simple self, unaffected, unperturbed, unembarrassed, captain of his soul."

Friends speak of his last weeks working at meetings of Bishops in Dublin or Maynooth; of his daily correspondence all beautifully written by hand; of the favourite dogs that accompanied his lonely walks; of his last walk from the Gresham to the Nunciature in the Phoenix Park and back only a week before he died. Above all, they speak of the angelic guidance which led him on the last morning of his life to say Mass in his Cathedral instead of as usual in his house. After a full day of work he retired to sleep, to wake, to suffer till morning and to die. If Englishmen wish to make peace and happiness with Ireland they must appreciate and understand such as Cardinal MacRory.

SHANE LESLIE.

THE PROBLEM OF SUPERNATURAL KNOWLEDGE*

THE problem which I am going to treat is that of supernatural certainty, the problem which confronts the Catholic theologian when he attempts the analysis of an act of faith. This analysis has been called the *Crux theologorum*, and it would be the height of presumption for me to undertake it in the short time at my disposal with any hope of covering all the ground. All that I can do is to put the issues before you in a general way and to offer a suggestion which some of you, perhaps, may think worth pursuing. The suggestion is one which requires detailed defence. If this does not become clear to all of you from the paper itself, it will no doubt become clear as soon as the discussion opens. In order to offer this suggestion I shall have to advance a number of theological and philosophical conclusions in a somewhat dogmatic fashion. Some of these conclusions are not universally accepted by Thomists; some, indeed, are held only by a small minority—although they are, I believe, fundamentally Thomist, it would be misleading to call them Thomist *tout court*. And the suggestion itself, which is based on these conclusions, has not been advanced in this form, so far as I know, by anyone. You will rightly subject it, therefore, to the severest scrutiny.

According to Catholic theology, an act of faith in God's revelation is supernatural, but also reasonable; accompanied by certainty, but also free. The problem is to reconcile these four requirements. Within the limits thus assigned there is room for considerable diversity of opinion, and the decisions of Popes and Councils have done little more than emphasize this or that element of the fourfold datum. It is for the theologian, then, to put the dogmatic facts together in such a way as to produce an intelligible unity without falling foul of any other dogmatic facts in the process.

It will be convenient to begin with the requirement of freedom. What do we mean here by a "free certainty"? By emphasizing the element of freedom the Church is clearly emphasizing that an act of faith is a matter of *choice*. We usually think of choice as occurring when we are uncertain of something. As a result of our choice, in such a case, we treat a particular conclusion as

* The text of a recent lecture to the Aquinas Society (London), in the form in which it was delivered. In order to put a point of view within the space of an hour it was necessary to condense to a degree which demands apology. The lecture should be regarded as merely showing the ground-plan of an unpublished work.

if it were true; we accept it in practice. But this does not make us certain that it is true. If we are to be *certain* of anything, it seems that it must be staring us in the face in some fashion. It may not be immediately obvious how there is room for the exercise of choice in such a situation. Or have we misconceived it?

To clear our minds a little on this issue, let us consider a few claims to certainty. To begin with Newman's stock example, *we* are all certain, presumably, that Britain is an island, although we may not have circumnavigated it. It seems to me that decisive evidence for this conclusion is in fact staring us in the face; the possibility that there is a world-conspiracy to deceive us on the point does present itself to us as an impossibility. But the evidence is of a cumulative sort; it need not impose itself on us at a first mention. A precocious child in a geography class might have legitimate doubts about it; and he might pig-headedly refuse to let into his mind, at least for some time, that further information which he requires for certainty. This is the sort of certainty, then, which does not arise with an absolute inevitableness. The certainty of one's own existence, on the other hand, is not avoidable, I should say, unless a man's intellectual powers are atrophied; it can be denied in words, but all the time it is being silently affirmed. Here, by the way, is evidence which we may call coercive, but which has an obscurity about it. We do know ourselves without any doubt, but dimly, behind our acts. To resume, is it enough to say that the freedom which the act of faith carries with it is sufficiently accounted for by the lack of inevitability common to all certainties of the "Britain-is-an-island" type? Hardly, I think.

By pointing to this freedom the Church is pointing, by general admission, to something about the gift of faith which makes it in a special sense refusable. It is insisted that the evidence for revelation is not coercive. Is it enough to say that there are special temptations to refuse this gift? Here we must note that the normal adult mind feels in fact no temptation to reject the evidence for Britain's insularity, and, further, that it *could* not feel such a temptation in any circumstances; an urgent need to invade this country has never led her enemies into wishful thinking about land-approaches. It is true and important that the gift of faith is often an embarrassment. It is clear that we may bar the way to it from unworthy motives, as the pig-headed child may bar the way to fuller knowledge about geography. But the point is, for our present purposes, irrelevant. The fact remains that the evidence for Britain's insularity, once seen, coerces, whereas the evidence for revelation, we are told, even

when seen, does not coerce. It follows that the evidence is not of the same kind in the two cases. The lack of inevitability in the matter of faith's certainty does not mean merely that the evidence can be avoided, but also that it can be somehow disallowed. Clearly we must come to closer grips with this topic of certainty.

It is important, I think, to make clear about certainty that it is its own guarantee. We are certain about things precisely because they are evident, because we see them. This may seem perfectly obvious, yet philosophers have in fact gone astray by trying to find some external test of certainty. There can be no such test—it would lead us into a vicious regress; we should have to test the test with itself. We have either become certain of something by seeing the evidence or we have not. If we have not, we can only go on investigating or conclude that there is nothing there to investigate. In particular, we must not try to *prove* to ourselves what we are certain about all the time. We cannot prove our own existences to ourselves, because we are always certain of them. The *cogito ergo sum* is a valid argument, but it *proves* nothing—because we all know the answer already. It supposes, in fact, a false question—a fertile source of trouble in philosophy, as the consequences of Cartesianism abundantly illustrated. We can only “prove” something by unearthing fresh evidence, evidence (that is) which is fresh to others or to ourselves. Once we have seen the evidence, we have no questions to ask about it; we simply enjoy it. We know that at this particular moment we are facing reality; it is impossible that we should be mistaken, as things stand.

I wish to lay emphasis on this point because it is often obscured, I feel, even by Thomists. To say that we can always make mistakes is misleading in such discussion as this. It is so easy to take it as meaning that *all* experiences of certainty may in fact lack objective correlates. Some such experiences, yes—but not all, for that would mean that we never really *know*. It follows that we must find two senses for the expression ‘experience of certainty’, that we must be able to make a distinction between a merely subjective state and the genuine article. I would put it like this: in ordinary speech when we say that we are certain of something, we often mean merely that we feel no hesitation about it—we do not mean that the thing *could not* be otherwise, that we have inspected all sources of error and excluded them once and for all. The mere absence of hesitation I ask leave to refer to as a “pragmatic” certainty. “Certainty” itself should mean, I propose, that there *can* be no error, that the bare possibility of it *has* been excluded. To deny that we have such certainties is,

quite clearly, to fall into the sceptic's self-refuting position, to saw off the branch on which one sits. To illustrate, I have only a "pragmatic" certainty that my return ticket to Chilcompton is somewhere secured on my person; on the other hand I am just certain that I am talking about certainty.

The distinction which I have been emphasizing ought to be made out more fully by a detailed analysis of particular situations. If there were time, it ought to be shown in detail that there is a verifiable difference between "pragmatic certainty"—between taking for granted what *in practice* always happens—and the real thing. The clue is that an act of the intellect is, as such, indescribable; the difference is there all right, but, when all is said, we can only point to it and state our claim to it. The character of certainty is the character of intellect. It is easy to misconceive it, if we live on the surface. That is how mistakes occur. We are in too much of a hurry. We do not consider all the evidence; we rush ahead of it. We *leap* to conclusions. We fall from contemplation. Adam, before the fall, made no mistakes. His mind was always, within its scope, a perfect instrument. *Our* minds are not always perfect instruments. We can be carried away from the vision of truth, we can forget about truth. But our minds are *sometimes* perfect instruments; the rust is not always on them—they have not lost their nature.

What, then, does it mean to say that we can always err? It means that anyone *may* be carried away by passion at any moment, given certain conditions, that we are always in danger. It does not mean that we cannot tell at given moments whether we have succumbed to danger or not. There are given moments in which we *know* that we have *not* succumbed. We are sometimes—and in this sense—infallible. This is the sort of apparently startling statement which is really a truism. It is only the claim to experience what I experience. When I claim to experience a pain, I give verbal expression to an absolute claim of my intellect. The verbal expression may offer handles for various sophisms. People may become so muddled by them that they become incapable of genuine thought about genuine certainty. Many modern philosophers, owing to an anti-metaphysical prejudice, seem to be in this case. That does not matter for us. Certainty is a private affair. But it does not bear only on private matters. It never bears, in fact, on *purely* private matters. It never comes to be at all save through an invasion from without. It embraces knowledge of things, of other persons, of the relations between ourselves and them, of laws, of universals. But we must not be distracted by these implications of certainty or by the question of its scope.

All that concerns us is to notice what real certainty is and to distinguish it from pragmatic certainty. It is not just a "taking for granted", an absence of doubt, which may correspond with objective reality or may not; it is the conquest of being. This is surely pure Thomism, despite some disquieting remarks in St. Thomas about the contingency of our knowledge of contingent things. Someone may still ask: "Could not a man claim absolute certainty and prove mistaken? And, if so . . ." No, we must answer boldly; if he is really certain, there can be no going back, save by forgetfulness or by the wilful forfeit of the evidence. If there should seem to be, it means that he was not certain, after all; his claim was only apparent—he did not really understand the nature of certainty, the nature of intellect.

I have spoken of a wilful forfeit of the evidence. This leads us back to a previous question. The evidence for Britain's insularity is, I suggested, coercive, once we have seen it. The evidence for revelation, we are assured, is not of this kind. The ground is now prepared, perhaps, for another distinction. Can we distinguish coercive from non-coercive evidence by referring not to the actual impact of evidence but to the permanence or non-permanence of its effects? The point is that *all* evidence seems coercive, simply as seen. If we really see it, we cannot doubt it. In so far as we doubt it, we cease to see it.

Evidence is not doubtful in itself. When we say that it is, we really mean that it suggests further evidence not yet available to us; we are doubtful about this further suggested evidence simply because it is not yet evidence. This is just as true of rational conclusions as of the bare deliverances of the senses, of sense-data. To return, then, to the proposed distinction between coercive and non-coercive evidence, the evidence for revelation is non-coercive, not because it cannot provide complete satisfaction (for it would cease to be evidence *pro tanto*), but because it can be rejected later. The evidence for Britain's insularity is not of this kind. We are besieged by it on all sides. But we can see the evidence for revelation and then deliberately close our eyes to it from a base motive. Then there is sin. Sin we cannot wholly explain, because at the heart of it is a negation, a refusal, a *not-doing*. We cannot expect to find a cause of it, therefore. It is a fact, baffling but undeniable. It is not in contradiction with anything in our experience; it is too different from anything for that—it is *sui generis*. A mistake is an indeliberate failure to see the evidence, an indeliberate jumping to a conclusion. Sin is a deliberate failure to *keep* the evidence. It is possible only when evidence is of a certain kind, when it requires a certain attention. The suggestion which I shall eventually

make about the nature of the evidence for revelation will gain some support, I think, from this last conclusion. May I ask you to keep the point in mind for the rest of the paper?

The question may now arise: does the Church teach us that we have real certainty in the act of faith, or will a mere pragmatic certainty suffice? The answer can hardly be in doubt. When the Church rejects the suggestion that a high probability suffices, we must surely take this to mean not only that there must be an absence of hesitation, but also that there is something objective which can cause, in some cases at least, a true certainty. Otherwise the credentials of Christianity are unsatisfactory. At the same time it appears that a baptized child is capable of putting the gift of faith into exercise before it is capable of true certainty. If we are to argue in terms of the intellect and of evidence, this would suggest that the child possesses in the gift of faith a power of knowledge capable of producing faith's certainty in the strict sense but not actually producing it until a later stage of intellectual development. The power may be exercised incompletely at earlier stages—in the form of a ready acceptance of Christian teaching, a consciousness of the Church's supernatural character which is as yet incomplete. The evidence shows itself only so far as to cause conviction that there is *something* attractive. It does not yet show itself in its full form. We might, therefore, speak of acts of faith in a looser and in a stricter sense. But are we to argue in terms of evidence? It will soon be obvious that this is the principal question before us this evening. Isn't it the paradox of faith that it is the evidence of things which are *not seen*? Does it fall, then, under the rules of intellectual operations? If we merely say that reason sees *that* God has revealed, whereas faith accepts *what* He has revealed, by the power of grace, we do not explain how *faith* is a cause of certainty. Indeed, by thus referring at the same time to faith's reasonableness and to its supernaturality—the two characters of it which so far have been barely mentioned—we are discovering the centre of the whole problem.

The nature of the difficulty must be made clear. First let us note how it is sometimes evaded. We are sometimes told that it is all quite simple. There are the well-known proofs of the Church's mission. Whatever she tells us must be true. We believe in mysteries on her authority. "Evidence"—that means the apologetic arguments; "of things not seen"—that refers to the mysteries, known to be true (though not known in themselves) as the result of a rational argument. Our conviction is also somehow or other God's supernatural gift, but that is all right; we wouldn't know anything much about that. No doubt God

gives people, converts especially, all sorts of extra helps, but we can't be expected to say just what *they* do. Faith is something pretty big, of course; "the beginning of eternal life", St. Thomas says, doesn't he? But you don't want to bring in any mystical stuff into this business of faith's certainty. You just want to be hardheaded and honest.—Yes, it is all quite simple, if we leave out the Gospel. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but my Father."

We cannot, then, accept the account of faith which I have just sketched in an unfair parody (though people do say things very much like it). It is part of the faith that an act of faith is an intellectual assent to God's authority of which natural reason itself is wholly incapable. This does not mean merely that reason could not discover the truths of faith apart from the fact of God's Revelation. It means that an act of faith essentially consists in a *supernatural* assent to God's Revelation. It means that the certainty of *faith* is not caused by rational arguments; it is caused by grace. What, then, do we mean by saying that faith is reasonable? That rational argument *leads* to faith, prepares the ground for it; that there is no conflict between our faith and our reason. The declarations of the Church on this subject seem quite explicit. Take, for example, the following proposition condemned by Innocent XI: "the will cannot bring it about that the assent of faith should not be firmer in itself than the weight of the reasons urging assent would warrant."* In other words, the firmness of faith is not measured by the weight of the rational arguments. To say that you accept the Church's doctrines because you have proved that God is her author is to offer a purely rational account of your belief. To doubt what you have proved to be God's word is simply irrational. To accept God's Revelation, then, by the assent of faith, involves some factor which we have yet to discover. Innocent XI, you will have noticed, seems to be saying that the clue to our question lies in the *will*. The rational arguments take us some part of the way, he seems to suggest, but the will must then intervene to produce faith's absolute firmness. There is thus a certainty which is not caused, it appears, by fresh evidence; if it were, we should use the language of intellect—will would, as usual, *follow* the intellect. Here it seems to be leading it. This is the great difficulty which I feel in our existing theology on this subject; the suggestion to which all this is leading is meant to relieve it. Here let me say at once that I put this difficulty with all due deference to the authorities. If it were purely a personal one, I should not venture to treat of it. But I find that

* Denz., 1169.

it exercises the minds of a great many thinkers. It cannot be said, I think, that this is a matter which falls outside the sphere of legitimate question. That is to say, it cannot be said that we *must* accept this appeal to will, whether or not we can *think* it, as part of our faith. It would surely be pressing Pope Innocent's words to say that they are defining a psychological theory—and this applies to other dogmatic utterances which might also seem at first sight to foreclose the issue. The Pope, I suggest, is simply condemning a certain error about the function of rational arguments. We need not read into his reference to will an exclusion of intellect.

My suggestion is, therefore, that the intellect bears in the act of faith on supernatural evidence. The rest of the paper will be concerned to bring out the advantages, as I see them, of this suggestion, to show why there seems to be need of it, and to defend it. Clearly there cannot be direct evidence of faith's mysteries, for they would cease to be mysteries. But is this the only sort of supernatural evidence which would meet our requirements? If we could claim supernatural knowledge of God as Revealer, wouldn't this meet them? The suggestion may sound unreal at first; later, I hope, it may seem more plausible. It will have to be shown that such knowledge is not untrue to experience and that, though obscure, it causes certainty. If there is such a thing, it is surely obscure; it is avoidable, non-coercive in the sense for which I have argued. Thus we could account for the emphasis laid on the will. We are told over and over again that faith is an act of the intellect ordered by the will (this is St. Thomas's formula). There are conditions attaching to it, we might interpret, which make it depend on our choice in a special way. It requires a certain attention, a certain effort. Certain dispositions are required before an act of faith can be achieved in the first instance; certain dispositions are required if such acts are to be repeated. But the acts are assents to evidence; and the evidence, in so far as we see it, makes us certain.

But before I make any detailed defence of this proposed supernatural knowledge, I must give some more definite indication of the usual Thomist account of faith; I must bring out my difficulty with some reference to texts—otherwise things will remain too much in the air. Fr Victor White wrote in *Blackfriars* some years ago* as follows (he is writing of the assent to authority): "When it (that is, this assent) rests on the Self-Revelation of God, though it may be supported by evidence of the credibility of His spokesmen, my assent as such rests on no evidence at all, but on a blind mysterious act of my will,

* January 1937.

itself empowered to it by the grace and the power of God." The only evidence, therefore, is natural evidence, yet I have supernatural certainty in virtue of this empowering, not of my intellect, but of my will. There is no need now to explain why I find this difficult. Let us dig down to the sources of this view. Fr. White draws on P. Garrigou-Lagrange, and P. Garrigou-Lagrange draws on St. Thomas. In his *De Revelatione* the French Dominican tells us that the motive of faith is God's authority, the authority of God revealing.* Our question is: "What makes us certain that we have this authority, that He *is* revealing?" No one is more insistent than P. Garrigou-Lagrange that the fact of Revelation, as scientifically proved, is not the motive of faith's assent. How, then, does He conceive of the special motivation which we require? He begins by referring us to St. Thomas's analysis of belief. "The intellect of the believer," St. Thomas tells us, "is determined to a particular conclusion (*ad unum*) not by the reason but by the will."† He goes on to say that the believer is like a knower (*sciens*) in so far as he gives firm assent, yet his knowledge is not perfected by clear vision in which respect he ranks with a doubter. Again, we have the passage from the *De Veritate* in which the will is described as "choosing to assent to a conclusion precisely on account of something which is sufficient to move the will but not the intellect . . . by this reward (of eternal life) the will is moved to assent to what is said, although the intellect is not moved by anything which is understood."‡ If St. Thomas is dealing here with our question (that being: *how* has the assent a certainty which is not merely rational?), it seems that his answer to it is *voluntarist*. He seems to go back on his intellectualist principles and to take refuge in a mystery—in a will which somehow supplies for the lack of fresh evidence. I must content myself with quoting only one further passage to indicate that St. Thomas does treat *our* question on those lines. He writes in his Commentary on the Sentences: "Faith has its certitude from something outside the *genus* of knowledge; it is in that of affection."§

To return to P. Garrigou-Lagrange, we must notice a section in his treatise with the following heading: "How must Revelation be known as the formal motive of faith?" The author proposes to show that we must have a supernatural knowledge of it (*supernaturalis cognitio*).|| This sounds most promising. The motive, he concludes, must be the First Truth, that is God; it is that in which we believe and also the means by which we

* *De Revelatione per Ecclesiam Catholicam proposita*, vol. 1, pp. 437-443.

† *S. Th.*, II-II, q. 2, a. 1, ad 3.

‡ *Q.* 14, a. 1.

§ 3 *Sent.*, d. 23, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 1, 2.

|| *Op. cit.*, p. 458.

believe it (*id quod et quo creditur*—the regular Thomist formula). If we could take this to mean that we had a supernatural *awareness* of God as Revealer, our supernatural assent to the truths of faith would be utterly justified. But P. Garrigou-Lagrange, following St. Thomas, teaches that the supreme authority is believed, but is *in no sense* seen. After all, then, it seems that there is no intelligible object to produce in us the required supernatural knowledge. A supernatural belief, I am arguing, must rest on a supernatural knowledge of the authority, if it is to be justified. If we only believe the authority without real knowledge of it, our whole position crumbles. Faith means assent to authority, yes; but what makes it certain, if this is not merely rational evidence, must be supernatural evidence of God the Revealer.

There are certain apparent hints of this sort of answer in the usual Thomist account, but they are vague and hard to fit in with the rest of it. P. Garrigou-Lagrange, for example, refers to the "mysteriousness of the light of faith . . . which we should need the Beatific Vision to understand as it is". But he warmly repudiates any suggestion that he admits an intuition of God.* (Incidentally, one of his arguments against such an intuition is that it could not be incomplete—we should have to know God fully or not at all. It seems sufficient in answer to this to point out that there are degrees in the Beatific Vision.) Then there is St. Thomas's recurrent theme that we are joined in faith to God's own knowledge, a theme which is sometimes repeated in a somewhat dangerous form as if God's own act of knowledge, that is, pure act, could be also our own. In fact, I cannot resist the impression that Thomist accounts both fall short in this matter and fall into excess—the very criticism so often and so rightly levelled by Thomists themselves against their opponents in other matters.

I hope that it will not seem to aggravate my presumption if I try to show even more briefly why the theories of certain Jesuit theologians seem to me even more difficult. Billot's view, its supporters say, bids fair to become a common opinion of theologians. This would be very awkward for me. Billot sees the difficulty in the traditional Thomist theory plainly enough—a theory, by the way, which the text-books of the Billot School call Suarezian, though Suarez himself calls it Thomist. The problem, Billot says, is to show how faith is not just the result of a logical process, to show that it is not "discursive". He proposed that the motive of faith is not our knowledge of God's authority; it is the authority of God in Himself. We naturally

* Op. cit., p. 507.

ask: how can *our* motive rest on something which we do not know? The answer seems to be, as before, that the will operates here without depending on intellect. A special feature in Billot's theory is its appeal to "human faith" as an explanation. We can believe a witness because he is who he is, because we trust him apart from all external evidence that what he tells us is true. This is called "the faith of simple authority", and Billot thinks that it offers a clue to our problem. But it is surely obvious that when we "pin our faith" on someone our attitude is either dictated by evidence or is unjustifiable; and further that we cannot assent to God's authority without realizing that it is infallible. If we leave out its infallibility, it is no longer His. Theologians of other schools have not failed to point this out.

P. Harent, in his monumental article on Faith in the *Dictionnaire* of Vacant and Mangenot, accepts from Billot the notion of God's authority objectively and in itself as the motive of faith. But you will look in vain, I think, through P. Harent's close-packed columns for any satisfactory explanation. You will find only the suggestion that "faith, in its infallibility and certitude, imitates divine revelation as its exemplar and model". "The divine omnipotence", P. Harent tells us, "raises our intelligence to produce assent", but not (apparently) by presenting it with any fresh object. Significantly he goes on to say: "the human will must also intervene under the influence of grace to produce this assent".* P. Harent's view of certainty is of a piece with this. Certainty can dispense with evidence, he holds, claiming (and with reason) that this is the view normally taken by our theologians. "Evidence", he says, "is nothing but a certain clarity in the motive of affirmation; infallibility is a special assurance attaching to this motive, a necessary link which it has with the truth."† Now the authority of God, once we have it, does link us necessarily with the truth. But the question is: how are we certain of this authority? If by rational evidence alone, there is no room for the light of faith. And P. Harent will not allow supernatural evidence. Faith, then, for him, gives supernatural assurance to *will*, by-passing the intellect. This is what I find unintelligible.

Then there is Fr D'Arcy's view. Fr D'Arcy, I think, does not allow my difficulty, and this is the strongest argument in my own mind against my conclusions. One does not lightly depart from his teaching. Nevertheless, many do so in this particular matter. In his *Nature of Belief* Fr D'Arcy tells us that faith's certainty "comes in one full and complete act and carries with it its own validity;‡ he insists that we need an "interior illumination

* Col. 304.

† Col. 208.

‡ P. 316.

to know the message of Revelation as our way and our truth!"* But, for Fr D'Arcy, the result of the illumination, so far as I can understand it, is only an empowering of reason to see the conclusion of the apologetical arguments. This seems to show the influence of P. Rousselot's work, *Les Yeux de la Foi*. According to Rousselot, natural reason of itself cannot provide a conviction that God has spoken through Christ and His Church. It must be strengthened by faith. Now if the historical proofs are themselves convincing, yet reason itself is not competent to perceive them (that, I take it, is Rousselot's meaning), doesn't it follow that reason is of itself incompetent to perform its own proper business? Faith will no doubt enhance the natural powers in their own mode of working; grace gives an elevation to the whole man, as Fr D'Arcy so finely brings out. But if faith shows us something beyond the scope of rational conclusions, must we not say that it shows us fresh evidence in a fresh mode of knowledge? To say that it merely enhances the natural mode is to say that man's natural powers are themselves too feeble to grasp the natural evidence. This would suggest that these powers have been atrophied by original sin, and that grace is but a remedy for this state of affairs, not a true elevation.

The question is not: can there be natural certainty of God's revelation? Even if there could be no such certainty, we should still be unable to see in faith's function a mere supplying of rational evidence—for the reason why there would be no such certainty would have to be that there is no such evidence; faith could not help us to see what in fact is not there. We may concede that a purely natural certainty that God has spoken is, at the least, not common; we may add that it would be followed immediately by the gift of faith. There seems no need to deny that such may have been the case for those, say, who witnessed our Lord's miracles.

In Fr D'Arcy's recent book *Belief and Reason* there is a passage which seems to state in most definite form that doctrine of will which I find so difficult. "Faith, then, takes the risk", he writes, "but it is more than a prudential venture. If the *desires of the soul* have not been clogged . . . they make a man aware that the goal of eternal life held out to him is his final destination and apotheosis."[†] The right moral dispositions are indispensable, yes. But can right desires of themselves *supplement* external evidence and *produce certainty*? Can they do more than prepare us for knowing an object which is supplementary? I now turn again, at last, to my own suggestion. It is that we have in faith a power of knowing God as the Revealer which is, rela-

* P. 299.

† P. 98 (my italics).

tively to our natural mode of knowledge, direct and intuitive. At first, no doubt, this sounds startling and dangerous. But it postulates only an obscure awareness which may be wholly unformulated; it may appear explicitly in consciousness only as that conviction of the Church's infallibility—despite all possible apparent objections—which the faithful, by common admission, must all possess. The Church presents herself to the minds of the faithful as having absolute, transcendent, value. "Something tells me", a man will say, "that the thing is true, despite these objections which I cannot answer." Isn't it the fact that the simple faithful possess a certainty which doesn't derive from natural knowledge? Does their faith make them better logicians or better historians? When a man says that he "seems to have lost his faith", he usually means that he *feels* no devotion, or that the rational arguments which he once found satisfactory now seem unsatisfactory. What do we say to him? Do we offer him arguments? Yes, but we do not rely on *them*. We say that faith isn't mere feeling, but a conviction, and we insist on the need for prayer. In prayer God communicates Himself to the soul in a supra-sensible mode of knowledge. As a result He is dimly seen—but only, as it were, behind His Church. We know Him only as setting His seal to her doctrines, though we do really know *Him*.

There will be many objections to such a view. First, isn't such a form of knowledge foreign to our psychology? It must be admitted that it is un-Aristotelian. That is why St. Thomas's system does not include it. But there have been many suggestions from respectable quarters that St. Thomas's epistemology is too rigid. There is abundant evidence to show that there is a supernatural supra-sensible mode of knowledge. Here I can only refer to P. Maréchal's *Psychologie des Mystiques*. I am not equating an act of faith with mystical contemplation; that would be a gross error. All I am suggesting is that the *mode* of knowledge is the same in each case. Thus the theology of the mystical life and the theology of faith fit in with and help to explain one another. For faith is the *germ* of contemplation. Thus we could show its growth as a homogeneous development.

According to the usual Thomist account of this development charity must intervene as a sort of substitute for supernatural knowledge. But isn't charity the fruit and flower of a living faith? Doesn't our charity spring from our knowledge? (But I am not *identifying* charity and faith.) To justify this development which I have thus baldly indicated would need another paper. But I could not resist showing you how pregnant the suggestion would be in consequences, if it should prove worth pursuing.

You will find broad hints of this sort of treatment in a great deal of Catholic writing, in recent years especially—but the implications, both in regard to the act of faith and to contemplation, have not been fully brought out.

The suggestion of a supra-sensible mode of knowledge in the act of faith may still seem unreal, untrue to experience. If it exists, why is it not generally recognized? The answer to this, I believe, is that the natural mode does not cease to operate when the supernatural mode makes its appearance. The two modes operate concurrently, and it is only in special circumstances that they will be experimentally distinguishable. Most converts, for instance, if not all, when they make their first act of faith, have before their minds some general idea of the Church as a recognizably divine institution; they advert, in some vague way at least, to the rational data. The natural mode of reason is operating. They may easily attribute their absolute certainty to these data. As we have seen, we need not deny that a natural certainty could be thus caused, but over and above there is always *faith's* certainty in the exercise of this supernatural virtue. This certainty, then, may not be distinguished in practice owing to the concurrence of the two modes. It is easily distinguished, I think, when the rational grounds cease to satisfy, yet the conviction remains. And we may note it in operation when the change occurs from "not seeing a hole in the evidence" to just seeing the evidence. Newman, you remember, could see no way of escape from the Church long before he could see the way in.

It may be useful if I try to explain less vaguely the difference between these two modes of knowledge, the natural and the supernatural. In the natural mode our materials for knowledge are all supplied through our senses; it is only when a sense-organ has been actuated by something outside it that our minds can begin to work. But, further, they can work only in terms of these sense-presented materials. Even our natural knowledge of God comes to us through the visible things of His creation. We do see through them to Him, but we know Him only as their creator. We have here what I would call a "background" knowledge of God, a knowledge of Him as *behind* His creatures. There is good ground for saying that in the supernatural mode we have a knowledge of God in which He moves, as it were, to the foreground. We still need the actuation of sense-organs (apart, that is, from *extraordinary* mystic phenomena) in order to be conscious at all—that is our nature, and the supernatural does not destroy it. But the intellect, called into play in the first place on the sense-level, is capable of receiving a fresh

influx of knowledge—under the power of grace—without any fresh presentation of sense-data. It receives a knowledge of God of a purely intellectual kind; it has an *intuition*.

It is not an intuition of God's essence. That is the technical expression for the face-to-face knowledge of the Beatific Vision. But it is a guarantee of Catholic truth which is not derived from sense-presented materials; something over and above the conclusions to which the natural reason can lead us on the basis of sense-grounded evidence. It is not a vision of God in and for Himself. It is knowledge of Him in the foreground, relatively to our natural knowledge, but the Church and her teachings in a sense dispute the foreground with Him. She is there also; although God in fact pervades it with His transcendent authority, we may not explicitly recognize this new mode of His presence, rather as in the natural order the honest seeker after truth may not recognize God though he in fact already *worships*.

It may be more obvious why conceptualizations of this experience are so confused—incidentally there is no need to be frightened of the word "experience"; must we not "experience" certainty? The ground of our certainty here is obscure for more than one reason. Not only are we distracted by our sense-grounded awareness, our knowledge of ourselves and of our surroundings, but we gain this certainty *à propos* of that visible authority which is even now presenting credentials to us, filling our imaginations and bringing into exercise our natural powers of so discursive reason. We hear God's voice, but He speaks to us in His Church. And His voice is easy to miss, if we are not clear-souled. It is rather like looking through coloured glass. First we see the objects within and we notice that they have an unusual colour. Then we realize that we are seeing also the glass itself which is spreading the colours. We must see the glass, if this simile is to apply. We must know God, not just an effect of God—that would not serve for this supernatural certainty. There must be a contact with God which He brings about in the "fine point" of the soul; there must be a touch to the soul itself, to the source of both will and intellect.

Will—in good Thomism—follows intellect. My whole effort has been to preserve this principle in supernatural psychology. Can we not intellectualize that language of will which has been the chief problem? I have said that there have been many suggestions along those lines. There is only time for a single example by way of conclusion. Rousselot in his *Intellectualisme de S. Thomas** says that there is one thing about St. Thomas that may surprise us—that in treating of these supernatural matters he

* P. 196.

"did not think of bringing out more clearly . . . the more exquisite intellectuality communicated (here) to the spiritual life". And he quotes from St. Thomas a text which may fairly sum up this paper: *Charitas habet rationem quasi dirigentem in suo actu vel magis intellectum* (3 *Sent.*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 3, ad 2). *Habet rationem*, because we are always rational animals; *vel magis intellectum*, because in the life of faith we have intuitive supernatural knowledge.

ILLYD TRETHOWAN.

THE NATURAL LIMITS TO KNOWLEDGE

OF anything whatever we may say that it is, what it is and what it does. That is to say, we may consider its being in the actual order of existent things as distinct from the impossible or the merely possible or potential, its essence or that which gives it its specification, and also its tendencies, energies and activities. In other words, we may consider its existence, its essence and its act. Those who deny the Thomist distinction between existence and essence must at least admit some sort of mental distinction, and even this distinction could not be made and agreed upon were there not some *fundamentum in re* on which to ground it.

It will be convenient to adopt a brief terminology for these three aspects. We may call our consideration of existence the static aspect and that of act the dynamic aspect. Since it is the essence of anything which enables it to be grasped and understood by the mind, we may call the third category the ideal aspect. In scholastic terminology this ideal aspect will correspond to the form or "thusness", while the static aspect will correspond to the matter or "thisness". But these correspondences must not be regarded as exact; for instance, the first act of a thing is to be, which suggests a dynamic element in the static aspect, because the word "act" is rather too like the word "action", and it is the latter rather than the former that is connoted by the dynamic aspect. Our division is more in the practical than in the philosophical order; but since no division is practical which is not consonant with fundamental reality, there is bound to be a considerable correspondence between the practical and the philosophical categories. To define the nearest possible scholastic

equivalent of the dynamic aspect in the analysis of substance would require too long a digression.

The Aristotelian doctrine that all natural knowledge comes to us through the senses is now generally accepted. One result of this is that the vocabulary in which we describe even the most abstract matters betrays its sensual origin, even when it is elevated above that origin by the use of analogy and trope. But there are more fundamental results than the limitations of vocabulary. Since our minds work, not by direct appreciation, as do those of the angels, but by piecemeal analysis of the given, and since this is the necessary consequence of our being partially immersed in matter, we have to carry over our analytical methods from the consideration of the data of the senses to our consideration of things more intellectual. Indeed, it is in these things that fundamental analysis is easier and surer for us and its results more luminous. But whatever we consider, the process is the same; we must analyse into parts to obtain an understanding.

We shall need a term to indicate whatever is made up, actually or potentially, of parts of any kind which are outside of one another in any way. Let us call such by the name of a self-extrinsicality, the hybrid effect of the Teutonic prefix to the Latin word being no worse than the only alternative, the use of the Greek prefix "auto-". And let us now apply to this notion of self-extrinsicality the triple analysis provided by the static, dynamic and ideal aspects enumerated above.

A static self-extrinsicality will be one which, in its manner of existence, and apart from any consideration of its actions, will be capable of division into parts. The fundamental basis of this is extension. The typical static self-extrinsicality is therefore space. A dynamic self-extrinsicality will be one in which action or motion will be capable of division. By this division of motion or numbering of its parts we have time, the number of movement according to before and after, as Aristotle says. The typical dynamic self-extrinsicality is time. Space has parts extensively outside of one another. Time has parts successively outside of one another. What will be the typical ideal self-extrinsicality? This will have to be whatever has parts ideally or notionally outside of one another. We think at once of a hierarchy of ideas, a classification. Even the same person at the same time may hold two offices which are quite distinct, not in space nor in time, but in order. Order is the ideal self-extrinsicality.

Space, time and order, then, are the fundamental forms under which knowledge comes to us, using the term "forms" in something of the Kantian sense, but without pretending that

they are *a priori* synthetic ideas imposed by ourselves on an external reality which can only be known by us phenomenologically, and never as it really is in itself. We may go so far as to say these things are *entia mentis*, but we shall add that they have their *fundamenta in rebus*.

If this is so, what are we to say about the extraspatial, the antetemporal and, if any meaning can be attached to the term, the supraordinal?

What about the space beyond space? It is a commonplace that we cannot imagine a limit to space as popularly conceived, nor yet an unlimited space, but this antinomy is resolved by consideration of the scholastic view of real space, ideal space, possible space, and the avoidance of the attribution to one of properties that belong to another. Those who are unaware of, or are unable to accept, the scholastic view and have tried to reach some understanding by mathematics and physics have produced numerous absurdities. The fundamental error seems to be due to the introduction of a fourth co-ordinate and the working out of certain equations on the ordinary rules for co-ordinate and vector geometry, and then going on to assume that, because these algebraic rules correspond, in three dimensions, precisely with the geometry of three dimensions at right angles, a fourth co-ordinate, worked out by the same rules, involves the assumption that there is a real possibility of another dimension at right angles to the fundamental three, although all that the mathematics really means is that, if there were such a dimension, this mathematics would in fact be the mathematics of such a continuum. The mathematics give perfectly valid results, but so do the mathematics of other, and much more elementary, and commonly so-named "irrationals" without involving any physical reality for the quantities dealt with. Clear and sensible mathematical ideas like gradient, curl (or rotation) and divergence become fantastic and unimaginable under such circumstances. And when we go on to postulate, as we do in electronic physics, a very large number of dimensions, and begin to toy with the idea that mathematical dimensions, beyond the third, correspond in some way with geometrical dimensions, we are nearing the lunatic fringe. Much of this nonsense has recently been recanted. The notion of curved space, for instance, involves the absurdity that space is a substance, as philosophers will at once realize even if mathematicians do not. But this does not mean that saner views are really any nearer to reaching a fundamental understanding. Fundamental contradictions still remain, and if the scholastic avoids these, it is only by admitting that he knows in reality exactly nothing

of what may be beyond space, if such a term can be said to have any meaning at all. Beyond space there is nothing, except the pure unactualized possibility of other creations. Of the nature of such nothing has been revealed to us, and of the space beyond space we know nothing.

Then there is the time before time. We know that, just as there is no real space beyond space, so there was no real time before time. This is symbolically referred to as the Eternal Years when the Godhead existed alone. Time began with the Creation and any attempt on our part to penetrate behind that event only makes our minds reel and involves us as surely in absurdities and contradictions as the attempt to consider the space beyond space. And here, too, revelation has not come to our aid.

There remains the order above order. We have spoken of space as we know it and of our inability to penetrate beyond it, and of time as we know it and of our inability to penetrate beyond it. If we now speak of order as we know it, and of our inability to understand what is beyond it, the analogy fails us at one point. The order above order, the order beyond that which we can grasp, can discover at least partially, can infer and reason about, is very far from being nothing. It is in fact the whole order of Divine Providence, together with those things which belong fundamentally to the inner nature of the Divine and which we could not know about without revelation, such as the doctrine of the Trinity. Here indeed we are beyond anything that we can know naturally, nor can we even say, without reservations, that we are dealing with a self-extrinsicality of any sort, even ideal. The problem of apparently unmerited suffering, of the origin of the first element of disorder and revolt in the universe in the Luciferian rebellion, the working of the hand of God now and in the future in the course of history, what would have happened if Lucifer had not rebelled, are all questions which we cannot properly answer. It is tempting also to maintain that the problems connected with determinism, grace and free will, towards the solution of which Molinist and Thomist, starting from different beginnings, make some little progress, belong also to the order above order. Were those who begin with the dogma of free will, and those who begin with the dogma of Divine Omnipotence, able to find the common meeting-place which still eludes them, then indeed it is not only we who would have to begin to revise our views.

It is true that revelation tells us a little about the order above order, but this, and the space beyond space and the time before time, remain our natural limits of knowledge.

F. ST. J. ORAM.

PATROLOGY AND THE NEW AGE

Aut quis liber sanctorum catholicorum Patrum hoc non resonat, ut recto cursu perveniamus ad Creatorem nostrum.

(Rule of St. Benedict., Ch. lxxiii.)

DURING the last hundred years, since the courageous pioneering of the Abbé Migne, the writings of the Fathers of the Church have appeared once again in the world of letters, of theology, and of practical everyday devotion. From the unfavourable beginnings at Petit-Montrouge in 1844 there has sprung one of the greatest adventures with most far-reaching effects in modern theological labours.

Concerning Jacques Paul Migne himself, Abbot Cabrol speaks of his being "endowed with a patience which no opposition could fatigue, and with a strength of will which made all bend before it, creating work after work, with no other capital than his confidence in himself, and realizing the final achievement of one of the most distinguished undertakings of our century".* All the monuments of catholic literature were revealed for inspection. The collaboration of the Benedictine Cardinal Pitra (then Prior of Paris) enabled the prodigious skill of the editor to complete his grand total of 533,291 pages of Latin and Greek Fathers. The daily drudgery and the weariness induced by poverty, by opposition, and even by a terrible conflagration on the premises, never daunted this brown-coated worker. To some his character is clearly revealed; to the majority his life and work are concealed by the mystic symbols of P.L. and P.G. repeated literally hundreds of times along the dusty top shelves. Even if Heraclitus does tell us "πολυμαθίη νόον οὐ διδάσκει", the young priest from Auvergne early showed those many outstanding intellectual qualities of his native countryside, which led to his later Herculean labours, which unflinchingly urged on a vast undertaking and which never allowed the most fearful setbacks to sap his courage or weaken his resolve "to be of greater use to the Church than many of the wise men and the saints . . . and then, present ourselves with confidence before God, our 'Cour de Patrologie' in hand".† The enlargement of the Christian mind and the development of a greater freedom in the pursuit of traditional teaching was no mere boasting of much learning, but, for Migne, a task self-

* *Histoire de Cardinal Pitra*. Paris, 1893, p. 108.

† "Migne's Patrologia, 1844-1944", *Downside Review*, October, 1944.

imposed by a mind already clear, audacious and passionately devoted to the truth of an all-pervading Christian thought. His grouping together of the earlier scattered works of Baronius, Dodwell, Mabillon, and Muratori gave birth to the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, issued by the Imperial Academy of Sciences of Vienna since 1866, when the work of Migne was finally accomplished. In these two major collections there has been rescued from oblivion the literature which had formed the language, thought and ideas of a true Christian humanism, for whose survival the battle rages today among the "multitudes in the valley of decision". But this return to the love of our Fathers will be painful and difficult in proportion to the degree of callousness in our past wanderings. "Why did we abandon the path of a patristic theology which St. Thomas had opened up in his masterly way? In the Summa there are plenty of patristic texts and a few syllogisms; in our manuals there are few patristic texts—which serve mainly as pious illustrations—and as many syllogisms as possible." This complaint of Dom Theodore Wesseling* is also the despairing sigh of the layman who is bold enough to glance at a technical theological manual. This lack of scriptural and patristic foundation in our modern spiritual writing had led, says the same Benedictine writer, to an unhealthy concentration "on psychological and abstract niceties which are unavoidably subjective". The results are clearly before us. Personal love of Christ inspired by solid dogma and traditional expression has been replaced by an oppressive individualism indulging in unfounded generalizations, avoiding precision of statement and, above all, relying upon self-centred religious feelings and contented with a vague expediency in social affairs prescinding totally from a rational knowledge of God and the creatures He has created. A haphazard belief in the power of altruistic example is no substitute for the divine charity so wonderfully revealed in the pages of the Fathers. Contemporary history triumphantly points to the deficiency of such worthless, even blasphemous, caricature of the spirituality handed down through the ages of Faith to our own unbelieving day. The prevailing acquiescence in a deliberate self-conscious modern approach to things both temporal and timeless has produced a twofold effect. Pathetic listlessness and slumbering in the face of even the most illuminating modern exposition are coupled with a deadeningly academic and esoteric teaching of snippets, disinterred from an admittedly impotent past while every other Tom, Dick and Harry looks up and is not fed. This ultra-modernity in method has not only broken a tradition

* *Eastern Churches Quarterly*, Jan.—June, 1942, p. 5.

but has devitalized Christian thought and replaced the serenity of virile language by a riot of verbiage and literary conceits. The case against such an exaggerated modernity in the life of the spirit is well put by C. S. Lewis—"there is a strange idea abroad that in every subject the ancient books should be read only by the professionals, and that the amateur should content himself with modern books. . . . This mistaken preference for the modern books and this shyness of the old ones is nowhere more rampant than in theology. Wherever you find a little study circle of Christian laity you can be almost certain that they are studying not St. Luke, or St. Paul, or St. Augustine, or Thomas Aquinas, or Hooker, or Butler, but M. Berdyaev or M. Maritain, or M. Niebuhr or Miss Sayers or even myself."* The existence of such study circles and the surprising recognition of many hitherto unexpected qualities should serve to reinforce the idea of Christian society, of the "Christus Totus", of the City of God, all problems and notions as vital to the life of the Patristic Age as to our own. Such recognition of abilities, of fundamental purpose and aim, has, as yet, produced only a meandering and sterile attempt to unite mutually opposing forces and to accentuate accidental divergences. The unity of the Church is an inescapable characteristic which is never so obvious as when divergences are deliberately singled out for criticism. The Christian study circles will continue to miss the obvious until a return is made to the standard works of Christian thought which provide not merely the standards of criticism, and the incentives to a deeper understanding and sincerity of approach, but, above all else, an illumination of intellect, for which there can be found no modern substitute. This appeal for Christian Humanism finds a clear exposition in the testimony of Canon George Duret of the Collège St. Stanislas, Poitiers: "Prenons au sérieux le problème des 'classiques chrétiens', et les prescriptions de l'Eglise: *ut germanam dicendi eloquentiam scribendique elegantiam tum ex sapientissimis sanctorum Patrum operibus, tum ex clarissimis ethnicis scriptoribus ab omni labe purgatis addiscere valeant.* Que l'humaniste chrétien traduise saint Paul non moins que Platon, saint Augustin non moins que Virgile! De préférence aux 'Arts poétiques', consultons les Génies du Christianisme: la poésie s'en trouvera aussi bien que la religion. . . . Ayant été perdus par la rhétorique non moins que par le scientisme, nous serons sauvés par la doctrine et l'oraison".†

The depravities of the Reformers led to the rise of a defen-

* C. S. Lewis, in Introduction to *The Incarnation of the Word of God*. Centenary Press, 1944, p. 5.

† *L'Humanisme et l'Humain*. F. Charnot, S.J., Paris, 1934, p. 462.

sive and utilitarian learning, and to the consequent safe although unprofitable internment of many a household treasure. Following upon the fall of Constantinople, a new "Carmen Seculare" was being sung through Europe, and it wakened many a voluptuous dilettante among whom the Dukes of Mantua may be easily singled out as typical. The passionate desire to appease the newly erected deities of the Renaissance, and at the same time to quash the monstrous leaders of a rising humane religion, gave birth to a type of apologetic which was both compromising and destructive, eclectic and exclusive, according to the daily fluctuations in the world of politics, letters and religion. The practical living of the Catholic people was ostentatiously paraded as an antidote to the excesses of the new race with its comforting teaching on justification by faith alone, and the high summer of the new learning was never so full of roses as when the simple Catholic clung tenaciously to the practical Christian rule of life and was simultaneously forced to desert the paths of traditional thought and the expressions of the ancients. This half-hearted, unconscious compromise was possibly an even greater evil since it arose among a people in whom logical discrimination and neatness of expression were deeply embedded both in their political and spiritual commonwealth. The formal doctrines of the Secularist way of life were never openly recognized by the practising Catholic majority, while the new religious sensations forced, nevertheless, an anxious awareness upon an instinctively traditional people. But such resistance as was called forth assumed a new method which was inevitably coloured by the neo-classical vocabulary and literary form. "A pagan sovereignty provokes a pagan resistance" is the summary conclusion given by Cardinal Baudrillart.* The half accepted standards of the new criticism gradually sapped the practical energy of a traditional piety, and the positive, objective character of Christianity gave way to the essentially individualist tone of a pagan period. It would have been in vain had all Counter-Reformation apologists made their own the excuse of St. Basil—"Do not mock at us if we conform not to your choice of words, and if we seek not to arrange them in harmonious fashion".† Such an outstanding Counter-Reformation hero as St. Peter Canisius would unblushingly have used these words of St. Basil, for, as Fr. Brodrick, S.J., in his *Life*, tells us, "he never became either a genuine stylist or an authentic scholar, because he lacked by nature the intuitive flair and vision that are required for the making of such people".‡ This citizen of Nymegen and of Heaven was only twenty-five

* *The Catholic Church, the Renaissance and Protestantism*, by A. Baudrillart, p. 7.

† P. G., XXIX, 120 D.

‡ Epilogue, p. 819.

when he became the pioneer author of the Society of Jesus by his editions of St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Leo the Great. This youthful devotion to the Fathers stamps the originality of one who was surrounded by a multiplicity of new approaches and methods in theological defence and at the same time illustrates the traditional vigour of the past-masters of the same glorious art. The letter to Cardinal Truchsess, written by St. Peter as late as 1572, shows the same ardent attachment to the Fathers.* But such men and their manners were being rapidly replaced by the "universal men", and their conceits of phrasing, inciting dialectics, and all-pervading fastidiousness gained an overwhelming victory over the supremacy of Catholic Truth. The Graeco-Roman civilization in which the Son of God lived and died in an occupied country reasserted itself with a soul-destroying vehemence. The fear and hesitation thus evoked among the less wise recall the words of Clement of Alexandria at the end of the third century: "The common herd fear the Greek Philosophy just as children fear Goblins".† The goblin-filled world of today is living in just such a state of fear.

The post-Tridentine method and its departure from the thought and language of early Christianity begot a new race of catacomb Christians. "The error is rather an amiable one," thinks C. S. Lewis, "for it springs from humility. The student is half afraid to meet one of the great philosophers face to face. He feels himself inadequate and thinks he will not understand him. But if he only knew, the great man, just because of his greatness, is much more intelligent than his modern commentator."‡ Such hesitation is surely unworthy of Christians, whose hearts should not be troubled but filled with the abiding presence of the Spirit of Truth. On the purely natural plane this diffidence is explained in many ways. The elimination of fears and paralyzing mistrustfulness cannot be entrusted to modern psychotherapy. The shepherds of Bethlehem were given a far greater assurance in the words of the angels: "For, this day is born to you a Saviour who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David." Christ and His Church can alone restore that balance which we find only too often lacking in pagan society. Virgil's tragic lines express poignantly the mental strife which causes such hesitation and suspicion: "Video meliora, proboque; deteriora sequor." Patristic literature is primarily concerned with the supremacy of the supernatural in every department of life. It is only with the rise of Protestantism and Capitalism that the natural order came to enjoy its present-day exaggerated pre-eminence. The

* *St. Peter Canisius*, by James Brodrick, S.J., p. 718.

† *Stroma*, I. 11-14.

‡ C. S. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

two orders, the natural and the supernatural, were set in formal opposition. "The argument treats persons and even God as if they were things, and handles the word 'capacity' as if it were equally applicable to things and persons." St. Thomas marks the difference when he says that "the divine substances are not outside the capacity of a created intelligence to the extent of being foreign to it, as sound is to sight or a spiritual substance to the sense".* The sharp distinction between the supernatural and the natural does not appear nearly so necessary today as a profound ontological penetration of every sphere of human life by the supernatural. This is, according to Alois Mager, "a fundamental principle of work for a Catholic civilization". In the days when Hurrel Froude condemned us all as "wretched Tridentines" he at least paid us the compliment of being good defenders. Now, when our catacomb days are drawing to a close, the householder can once more bring from his treasure the old as well as the new. Again, attention may be given to the increasing numbers of the household who have time to linger in the market-place, whose jostling crowds ask not for defence but for explanation. No longer, "who are you?", but "what manner of man are you?" is the modern question. The grandeur and literary distinction of our early authors has made us what we are. Each man in this centenary year of Newman's conversion must make his own the Cardinal's candid reply to Pusey's "Eirenicon" in preferring to the contention and subtle theology of the Secularist ages that "more elegant and fruitful teaching which is moulded after the image of erudite antiquity. The Fathers made me a Catholic."

Some present-day devotional writing and the dogmatic work of Lebreton, de la Taille, Mersch and a few others, sufficiently illustrates a desirable reliance on earlier models. Such successes indicate a welcome to the revival of patristic literature enshrined in the best of modern prose. The fictitious controversy between Tradition and New Values, Established Convention and Innovation, implies a rigid dichotomy which nowhere finds expression save within the make-belief modern mind. All human behaviour must contain both elements at risk of a purely ornamental extravagance in every field. Each and every form of modern bureaucracy reveals this fruitless distinction which has permeated not only institutions but ideas in our prevailing chaos. We have fallen discreditably short of our predetermined modernity and have made an alarming misalliance with the worst of the past and the gravest distortions of the present. This collision of opposites cannot be called accidental when an illogical and

* Fr. Martin D'Arcy, S.J., in *Death and Life*, pp. 117-18.

inhuman division has been purposely propagated. Such segregation and notorious opposition as exists today between the universal, fundamental nature of man and his varied behaviouristic tricks cries to Heaven for vengeance. The reverberations of that cry are being heard throughout the world today, and yet the unruly clamour has called forth only inadequate replies. The yearnings and pathetic hopelessness of our plight give no promise of comfort but serves only to deepen the gravest despair, while the remedy lies within sight and hearing. Our growing self-possession, at least among those nations which now have an opportunity for reconstruction, should put an end to our incalculable wanderings from the objective, Truth, Unity, Goodness and Beauty, which alone can give meaning to the mystery of the Universe. The minutiae of the coming replanning must be recognized at their own true value, and the details must not be allowed to replace the comprehensiveness of the full canvas. The Fathers provide just such a universal outlook and policy which once shaped the building-up of Christianity after the Imperial collapse. The present disruption of world order has brought about the criminal slashing of this masterpiece; the "City of God" has been reduced brick by brick; the "Whole Christ" has been literally dismembered.

The dread of annihilation and extinction carries with it an equally frightening determination to overcome all fears and to outstride the most ferocious war-horse. The nursery-rhyme catch, "We'll weather the weather whatever the weather, whether we like it or not", grows up within us stronger than ever as the hour of dissolution approaches. The old books of Christianity's nursery days carry the same vital insistence. Their serene expectancy, and youthful exhilaration, their intense compression and translucent radiance, their tempering of human feelings and invigoration of thought, provide the essentials of a stirring refflorescence among the putrefying boneyards of our modern waste-lands. "Let us not grow so as to become old after being new, but let newness itself grow."* Towards the end of the patristic age St. Gregory of Tours reports the lament of many in the cities of Gaul: "Woe upon our times, for the study of letters hath perished from among us, and no one in the world can be found to tell us by his writings what is happening in our days."† The Graeco-Roman Christian tradition, within which the new life itself must grow again, represents "together with all visions which the Man of Galilee gave to the consciousness of mankind, all the lessons which the philosophers of antiquity

* St. Aug. in Ps. cxxxi, 1.

† *Hist. Franc. Proemium.*

had left there; it is because, far from being in opposition to the past, Christianity has crowned and completed it".*

The clamour for novelty of approach did not fall unheard in the Rome of Pius IX. His letter, "Tuas Libenter", of 21 December, 1863 (Denzinger 1680), and the condemned proposition in the "Syllabus" (Denzinger 1713) serve today not as warnings but as rebukes. The accusation of obscurantism is readily dropped when the harvest of pagan enlightenment has proved Dead Sea Fruit. Since the days of St. Benedict and the possibly contemporary decree of Pope Gelasius,† the Divine Office has always reserved for the clergy, and for an ever increasing number of laity, the more distinguished homilies of the Fathers. The prayer which begins a day of study leads to the Fathers as the pre-eminent source of traditional teaching. St. Thomas further accentuates their importance in his theology. "Ultimately," writes Fr. Gervaise Mathew,‡ "the theology of the Summa is a synthesis between the Augustinianism of the eleventh-century scholastics and the new knowledge of the Greek Fathers that was slowly drifting westwards. A revival in patristic theology would only bring a clearer understanding of St. Thomas's theological thought." This westward drift of the stream has now reached the proportions of a flood, and the spirit of God is still hovering over the water so that "we may by a straight course reach our Creator". . . .

"Aut quis liber sanctorum catholicorum Patrum hoc non resonat, ut recto cursu perveniamus ad Creatorem nostrum."

A. HADSHAR.

* M. Camille Jullian, *Revue Historique*, Vol. LX, p. 342.

† Cf. Holy Rule, cap. IX, and Thiel, *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum Genuinae*, t. i, pp. 454 seq.

‡ *Blackfriars*, Jan., 1938.

POEMS

By J. D. C. Pellow

IDEALISM

I

THAT randy world of the Regency,
Toughly compounded of extremes
Of raffishness and piety,
Had little use for Shelley's dreams.

He preached to it with a voice shrill
And tongue airily eloquent;
Confusing must and can and will,
Be wise, he cried, be innocent!

But Byron said, Predestinate
To be that crooked thing, a poet,
What wonder if a twisted Fate
Make me a rogue too, and I know it!

I do not wish for innocence;
The savour of living would be less,
And the tedium more intense,
Without the salt of wickedness.

My dear young friend, said S.T.C.,
How comforting, how very nice,
If we could simply turn a key
And walk into lost Paradise!

But a sad discontinuity
Falls steeply between wish and will,
Which all our fine philosophy
And all our talking cannot fill.

Far down that dark and caverned rift
Is fallen the pearl without a stain;
We flung away the precious gift
And cannot bid it back again.

But Shelley, highly sensible
Of innocence inviolate,
Replied, Society is Hell
And Two or Three spells lust and hate.

THE DUBLIN REVIEW

He sailed his paper boat away,
 Sadly and singly virtuous,
 Beyond the common coasts of day
 To Atlas and to Caucasus.

2

Margaret Fuller, an adept at ideals,
 Affirmed, I accept the nature of things.
 By God, she had better! said Thomas Carlyle;
 But it does not do to smile:
 Catchwords change and fashions of opinion
 Change, but not the idealist passion
 For evasion, for invention of phrases,
 Covering our nakedness with airs and graces.

AD TE LEVAVI OCULOS MEOS

Important persons born to position,
 Wealth, the habit of ruling,
 Well nourished men, successful in business,
 Will stand no fooling.

They walk the world in proud possession
 With confident air,
 Saluting strangers and mere nobodies
 With cool stare.

Ordering affairs with carrying voices,
 Or a kick, or a nod,
 They expect compliance, take no refusal
 From man or god.

They set an example on official occasions
 In public places,
 Deferring to a strictly constitutional deity,
 Covering decent faces.

But what large contempt, O Lord, what easy
 Laughter and scorning
 They have for poor devils who wait on Thy mercy
 From evening to morning;

Who have not studied the art of succeeding,
 Who lift up to heaven
 Hands empty and eyes that acknowledge
 The gift given.

THE STARLING

For an hour or two at the turn of the year,
The wind drops and wet skies clear,
And the ragamuffin starling bubbles and chatters
From a sunlit bough, as if nothing matters.

Free of heart and travelling light
Like bird or vagabond, we might
Shut eyes to what is coming after,
And greet the rare sun with laughter.

Waiting for the wind to veer,
We cannot use that easy cheer,
Or, watching for the storm to strike,
Forget what the last gale was like.

Ravelled in time's tangle, spun
Of deeds irrevocably done
And dues tomorrow will urge on us,
We cannot ease the burden thus.

It is idle to cut the living flower
And isolate the illumined hour;
Its flickering gleam cannot obtrude
Upon our dark solicitude.

At the lowest point of the descent,
Amid time's ruins and the spent
Rubbish of a dead season,
We need a light beyond all reason,

Steadier than the sudden sun,
The animal warmth that cannot run
Beyond the exalted moment, or stay
The brief course of a winter day;

No visionary ecstasy
To dazzle or distract the eye,
To blink the straits in which we are set,
Or make December darker yet.

There was an earlier winter when
Some few ordinary men,
Carrying their dull burden, saw
A revelation in the straw.

THE DUBLIN REVIEW

They beheld the Highest assume
Trodden dust and mortal doom;
There, in mockery of human pride,
The usual was dignified.

This is an old and hackneyed story
Of cloudy and ambiguous glory;
It does not flatter, and man's wit
Comes hardly by the truth of it.

But happy still is he whose heart
Can learn the all-but-impossible art:
To care for all things and have care
For none, to find all weathers fair.

EPIPHANY

When the three wise men came out of the waste
Into the populous Empire, interlaced
With new arterial roads, beneath the stars
Nightly, and by day, in taverns and bazaars,
They heard much talk of matters of much weight:
The new world order and the one world state,
The planned economy, the end of war,
The free bread, the games, and oh, much more.

But when they came to where the young child lay,
That was enough for them; they would not stay,
And, coming home to Babylon, they said,
We did not listen; we used our eyes instead.
We saw the sun set and night fall
On crumbling column and on tottering wall,
On temples shored and towers underpinned,
And cracked ramparts patched against the North wind.

All this we saw, which few, I think, of them
Even imagined. But in Bethlehem,
Under the rubble of a tumble-down
Stable in a slum of that obscure town,
We found this also (we speak as best we can):
We saw the forgotten foundations, we saw Man.

By J. H. Froemberg

I

The rock is worn by waves,
what seems substantial

is powerless to prevail;
the dust of graves

befriends it as an equal;
disintegration
mocks Goliath's strength;
so giants fall

exhausted by eternity.
And shall my self
become as dust; does this
apply to me?

2

No seas sound
like as loud
nor pebbles pound
nor silk mist shroud;

No dumb hands grope
nor fingers twine
nor thoughts elope
as these of mine;

O speckled, sieve
and scroll-like skies
lead me to live
where no tree dies.

3

The co-Creator Christ
lay wrapped upon the rood,
and He made men again
Whose Father made the wood.

So now shift up the shoulders
and companion the cross;
this is the treasure; lay
it up; buy good from loss.

I cling, catch, clasp
and endlessly embrace;
behind my empty eyes
O Jesu show Thy face.

4

Lengthen your litanies
 black-hooded choirs;
 be spendthrift with psalms
 you brown lords of poverty;
 you virgins and martyrs,
 faithful in following,
 praise for me silent,
 singing my silence
 with saint-angel sanctus
 now after Pentecost.

THE CHERRY TREE OF KENSINGTON

A Carol in the modern idiom

Shall I tell you? You are a woman
 dancing in a pink dress,
 flipped out like a fan
 in a curved caress
 against a house in an evening suit.
 You seem to be out of place
 dancing mute
 with a careless face.
 "Candleflick lightening, cannon of chords,
 and hush of the Holy Ghost,
 a wealth of words
 Hannibal-host
 to Joseph, father, the never-known;
 and came a ceasing of care
 for Mary's loan
 is Christ heir.
 And ever since I am deafened and dazed
 and dance an ersatz gavotte,
 moving amazed
 and speaking not.
 Now glory to the Father be,
 likewise to the Son
 and Spirit, holy
 three in one."

LINES TO AN ELDERLY GENTLEMAN CROSSING THE ROAD

Why should you hurry, you who have seen
 through your greenhouse glass panes,
 through the heat in your eyes,
 enough of experience?

Why do you loiter, now in the night
 when the daylight darkens
 when the winter's largo
 frizzles up life?

Envoi

Send a seed to kiss the earth,
 Shoot a flower to see the sky;
 If you hurry you will live,
 If you loiter you will die.

VIRGIN BIRTH

By S. M.

Not knowing, not minding
 Is embracing
 What finds at obscure depths
 And strange enlarges:
 This is the soul's prayer
 Finding His Will;
 This, too, is a Virgin's answer
 Feeling for, forming
 Word.

Woman, clothed with the Sun
 With His Will enfolded: mould of His Word,
 In love's melting, formed and forming,
 Yielding to Him, Him to us yielding.
 Wombed in Light, Light enwombing,
 Word receiving, Word conceiving,
 Commerce unsearchable.

Virgin, you
 Are hid from yourself deep in His Will: fruitful
 Only in that Womb of Light—so
 You womb and warm to our world
 Light eternal.

Virgin, dying
 Into this deep light
 Out of all worlds,
 After this our exile
 Lighten to us your womb.

BACKGROUND TO THE PRESENT IMPASSE IN POETRY

ENGLISH literary criticism has always been a little impatient of aesthetic theorizing: understandably, in that much of it is relevant less to the concrete problems of poetry than to some private philosophical schema. Such objections might fairly be raised against Jacques Maritain's *Situation de la Poésie*, except that he has made a genuine attempt to deal with what he feels to be the modern poetic impasse. His conclusions are sufficiently relevant to deserve the most stringent critical attention. His final conclusion is that poetry is suffering from growing-pains due to its emergence into a self-conscious activity after its florescence during the age of naïveté. He goes on to suggest that by cleansing the springs of poetry in the centre of the poet's personality, which to him is the fountain-head of the poet's creative activity, somehow the impasse will resolve itself: "the Mind's internal heaven shall shed her dews of inspiration". There is a certain ambiguity in the latter half of this conclusion, due to the fact that Maritain only notices in parentheses that this centrality of thinking and feeling which he calls "wholeness of being" presupposes a known "wholeness of reality" outside the mind. He takes little account of the actual origins of this poetic disintegration and of the cultural conditions under which poetry nowadays is written.

Recently I was present at a discussion on poetry at which different continental writers spoke. One conclusion emerged: poetic symbolism had broken down and this accounted for the

rupture in continuity between the art of the *élite* and that of the people. It was felt, too, that the way to that breakdown had been a fairly long way, and bound up with certain material factors which had predisposed towards the decline. A short scrutiny of these trends and the reactions they brought in English poetic history, avoiding what may be thought to be injudicious generalizations, ought to point the way to important conclusions about the authentic purposes of all poetic activity.

The great difficulty is that the world of the traditional symbols was very unlike our world. A world where the theological symbols of Christianity were common property, an I-Thou world where nature was felt as intimate and near, where the movement of clouds was a dramatic and human event, where everything was a sign of something else to the point almost of superstition (as in mediaeval astrology) or of nausea (as in much allegory), did give an emotional satisfaction to people which created a milieu friendly to poetry and without which there is danger of poetic unhealth. It is possible that, as Jung says, there are archetypal symbols that recur in human history, and whether that is provable or no, the Chaucerian writer could feel that he shared common symbols with the common reader. His attitude to language was significant. Words were something almost physical and drenched with the human meaning that generations had poured into them. Language was not just a tool, but a tradition invested with a weight of human experience, a tradition which re-use did not necessarily stale into a convention, but which could be reinvigorated and redeveloped by the sensitive man. It was the rock from which your culture was hewn. The resultant unity of intellect and emotion may have been precarious at times and often less an achievement than an aim. But it explains the essentially undivided nature of Chaucer's mind, its sensitive edge as well as its tough intellectuality: the modern gangrene, if it exists in poets like Chaucer and Dunbar, is local. The poetry of this age was written from a centre, nourished not only from private feelings but from the feelings of a people, and by relevant thinking sustained by sane feeling.

This picture of the world remained in its essentials until the seventeenth century, and was not radically disturbed by the discoveries of the Renaissance, some of which went to fill out the tradition with symbols gathered from the New World. Already, however, the balance between thinking and feeling was more hardly achieved, and the work of Shakespeare emerged from an intense struggle in his own person. Language was becoming unmanageable, hence the eruption of Euphuism: and throughout the later plays in particular one is increasingly aware of his vic-

tories over it as tremendous feats of Shakespeare's athletic imagination. The metaphysicals who followed still worked within the Chaucerian afterglow, but they also had to wrestle unnaturally with the language, which accounts for their failures of communication.

In the interim, experimental science was coming into its own. Luther was already fulminating against the aridity of a decadent reason, a monstrosity which was making living impossible, *bellua qua non occisa homo non potest vivere*, and at the same time the language of signs was no longer valid between God and man. Nature as the romantics were to know it was becoming a stage property, but when the eighteenth century came it still felt itself writing within a tradition, even if the tradition had contracted. Poetry was still the vessel of civilization, and it still had, what is of capital importance, an objective reference. Already, however, the chill of the Enlightenment had fallen: the *lure intellettuale piena d'amore* was replaced by the lucid hate and intellectual acidity of eighteenth-century satire, a quality quite distinct from Dante's hate. It was the bitterness of emotional frustration that kept ruffling the brilliant Augustan surface. *Ut pictura poesis* was one ideal: but the picture came to life in the most disconcerting places. It seemed a closed universe, but volcanic shocks were preparing within. In contrast, the Chaucerian world had been full of dynamic existences set in motion by one dynamic act; yet though the forestage was alive with all the drama of passing away and coming to be, it was against a backcloth that was stable. The obscurities of Time were presented before the eternal certainties. The eighteenth century, however, fixed the convention, not of a stable, but of a static society, and all its writing circulated within that convention. By the time of Blake the convention had become an impossible disguise. Clarity, proportion and integrity had been achieved—of a sort; and at a cost. After Blake, the dichotomy between culture and civilization was now a declared fact.

The geometrical "nature" of that geometrical mind against which Pascal had pitted his powers was not one from which man could gather great emotional satisfaction. The "nature" that science was bringing to light had become something very different from the warm reality of Chaucer's world, and it grew plain that in time it would prove psychologically unendurable. The world of sensible entities was being replaced by a world of mathematical symbols. The romantics, in self-defence against the growth of this scientific Leviathan, invented a counter-universe of *poetic* symbols, and there the romantic convention of "nature" was born. The Coleridgean theory of the "two truths" (sponsored

today by I. A. Richards)—the truth of science and the truth of poetry—categorically declared that poetry, too, was a way to knowledge, a co-equal of science: a claim, made under provocation, and far in excess of the facts. What the romantic critics were fighting obscurely was not scientific method as such; it was the superstructure of scientific philosophy (today fashionably known as “scientific humanism”), which, in its outrageous mental provincialism, was making itself the arbiter of all knowledge. Through its philosophy, science, as a technique originating from the senses, was working to debar any other of their uses and finally would destroy man’s natural sensuous awareness. Keats was the first to feel this keenly, and hoped, by accepting the senses, by remaining himself awake and aware, to regain some lost territory for poetry. Unfortunately, the initial misconception that poetry, like science, dealt in symbols and not in things, led him to hunt out the tradition of the language in literature alone, in Shakespeare and Milton, until he faced his own failure in *Hyperion*.

The new philosophy had defeated Coleridge and Keats, and yet it is *de rigueur* academically to believe that Wordsworth’s later silence was due to disappointment in a French affair. But fundamentally Wordsworth shared the same defeat as his contemporaries: he could not fight down the doubts with which an all-devouring science had infected the air. Yet it seems patent that Wordsworth had the elements of a solution within his grasp had his nerve not failed. While he inherited, more than the other romantics, the civilized sanities of the eighteenth century, it was to be one of the disabilities of his definition of poetry as “emotion recollected in tranquillity” that it did not imply a coherent attitude, but suggested that poetry was made out of “lyrical moments” with no necessary continuity. (*The Lyrical Ballads* is significantly named.) This, incidentally, is the first basis of the later theory of pure poetry. Among his dalesmen he hoped to find that living language that the coffee-house was losing touch with. He mistook his aim, however—which was a revivification of what now seemed the moribund traditional symbolism—in a routine fidelity to all that he heard and saw, with results often pathetic and trivial. Furthermore, a recognizably Wordsworthian dreariness informs works like *Michael*, a lack of total objectivity, a partial realization. As with the other romantics, his private emotions were the springboard, and these could only be shared with the ordinary reader by being made as imprecise as possible: this century’s version of the anonymous objectivity of Chaucer. While trying to fight his way back to the ancient unity of heart and mind, of man and nature (as in the *Luce* sequence), he unwittingly

tingly caricatured the ancient naïveté. The latter half of his century went on industriously cultivating its own misery and the world's, and advertising in life its personal eccentricity and finally its fin-de-siècle perversion. Emotion remained vague, because it had no well-defined object except the subject himself.

In France Baudelaire saw that the romantic attitude was only a half-attitude, so to speak. Recording his emotions honestly and precisely, he capitalized the ennui that followed the lyrical moment—*mes vœux consumés ne voient que des souvenirs de soleils*. He connected the past delight with the present ennui. Here he was in advance of the then current preoccupation with departed time and nostalgic memory, refusing to live permanently in a state of ecstatic suspension. He neglected to join in the hunt for a point outside time in some terrestrial nowhere, or outside present living, which could be made a starting-point for poetry, and which would tie up existence into some sort of unity. A significant aim but an error in procedure.

Jacques Maritain's analysis begins with Rimbaud, who doesn't really explain himself. After Rivière, he makes Rimbaud's poetic advances a sort of perverted pilgrim's progress. Rimbaud's project, however, of reassigning the functions of the various senses was primarily a poetic ruse to avoid the emotional clichés of romanticism, widening rather than narrowing the gap between the minority and the people, who had already begun to suspect that all serious art was necessarily morbid and recondite. Like Rimbaud, the symbolists, imagists and advocates of pure poetry treated the word as an object, an end-product, instead of itself a sign: and they constructed from it complicated equations of their private emotions, unconscious desires and nightmarish dreams, trying to shock people into understanding their work. But a mass art was already in the making, the public having resigned itself to art being unreal. As a soldier acts daft in the desert to make life tolerable at all, they looked for a safety-valve, an escape, an emotional indulgence. Serious art at the same time was cultivating its own sort of unreality, which finally leads to the cul-de-sac of insanity; when symbols become walking realities the mind of man is already reeling. Poetic knowledge becomes a fanatical itch to see, to tear the veils apart, which, like the scientific itch, plunges the world in unmeaning. Maritain quotes the analogy of pure melody which gives liberation, but in poetry at any rate, as in Greek tragedy, this liberation is only possible after the poetic situation has been stated and developed and the emotions prepared: you do not win liberation until you are entitled to it. It is clear from recent poetic history that it is not only a question of the poet's jealous obscurity standing in the

way of communication between him and the simple: it is the lack of a common language with a single objective relevance. For that reason alone it is absurd to ask the surrealist to tear off his mask of opaque symbolism: the mask is surrealism. There now existed a poetry of culture which was no longer a poetry of civilization.

The nineteenth-century poet tended to separate himself off from society because he was living in one that was rotting inwardly: or else he had himself accepted there, in a way that involved a certain betrayal of his poetry. Tennyson and Browning are examples: Hopkins was one of the few who had, in any important sense, a social concern. The post-symbolists went on to create a private poetry. This alienation from society, however, had already tended in the romantic period to become an alienation from life. Arnold, by his much-disputed phrase "criticism of life", seems to have meant a moral "placing" of situations, the grouping of the poetic material around the finalities of birth, growth and dying. Yet from his own poetic practice one gathers that he shares the romantic *accusation* of life, its tedium, its unhappiness, "the turbid ebb and flow of human misery". That is, something at once less tragic and less serious, because more personal to the poet (even if he generalized his misery) than, say, Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. So confined to his own closed world, he seemed to shutter himself off from the hostling universe outside. In the *Canterbury Tales* and Shakespeare's plays poetry was still centred in persons. This was less and less true. It now centred around the poet's personality, which had suffered a sentimental inflation with Shelley's world legislators and the godlike Hugo — *le Dieu qui croit en Dieu!* Poetry's social direction, its epic and dramatic functions, had been annexed by the novelist: and poetic attempts at reannexing them were abortive and unconvincing.

It is sometimes assumed that poetry only attained self-consciousness in the nineteenth century, but as good a case can be made out for the belief that it lost consciousness of many of its functions. It was not the appearance of self-consciousness that disrupted the earlier spontaneity, but something quite external to poetry, the rise of the scientific critique of sensation. This was slowly eroding away the poet's sensuous world, whittling it down to something inimical to feeling, stripping it of the sound, scent and colour that are the life-blood of art. This became evident to the philosophers themselves, and when Jeans and Eddington presented their world where nothing existed except waves of probability and units of measurement, the metaphorical jam had been laid thick on the scientific pill. The mysterious universe was in reality a perfectly unmysterious con-

course of mathematical entities presided over by the deist God, the lovelessness that moved the sun and all the stars. This philosophy was becoming an insupportable tyranny of ideas, an ideology of science without wisdom, that established its own objectivity by cutting away the ground of objectivity from everything else. As for applied science, it was especially there that the hollowness of scientific humanism was exposed, as Einstein nakedly admits in these words spoken in 1938: "Instead of freeing us in great measure from spiritually exhausting labour, it has made men into slaves of machinery who, for the most part, complete their long day's work with disgust." He adds pathetically: "You will be thinking that the old man sings an ugly song." It is still not apparent to him, however, that if misapplied science made men slaves of machinery, it was because men had already been made the slaves of ideas to which pure scientists had given their endorsement. The poet's experience of mental and emotional oneness had already become fragmented, but even over this there fell the shadow of a guilty conviction that all the time he was really staring into a mathematical vacancy. Feeling was driven underground: the world that "scientific humanism" saw could not possibly satisfy the poet's appetite for life. Poetry, confirmed an eminent poet, was a mug's game.

The controversy between science and poetry is so tedious that it is almost bad form in recent criticism to advert to it at all. Nevertheless, at the risk of making a perplexing problem seem more perplexing, it seems opportune to elaborate briefly on Einstein's "ugly song": The environment that applied science had created for the poet was not luminous like the old environment with something of the quality of man's mind, but rather seemed an environment, in Rilke's words, of "pseudo-things". As such it was one to contract out of, as Rimbaud did by tearing it into coloured shreds and putting them into a new context in *Les Illuminations*, or as others did less subtly in the verse of the country week-end. The industrial revolution was repudiated or ignored: if there was a brief spurt of pylon poetry in the 'thirties of this century, it was soon to exhaust itself.

This, then, is the background to the poetic impasse. Modern poetry has stemmed away from a fully human tradition and is unable to create new poetic concepts to overcome the poet's failure of communication. Its symbols have become a disease because they are not grounded on life. The abyss has widened between the poet and the reading public. It has already been shown how poetry's epic and dramatic functions have been resigned to the novelist. Incidentally, apart from best-sellers, the novel, too, is losing its public as it approaches the condition of

poetry, in *Sons and Lovers*, *Portrait of the Artist*, *Temps Perdu* and *To the Lighthouse*. Poetry lost what Wordsworth had called its "home-bred sense", its social and moral direction, and became a poetry of culture without civilization. It lost its confident objectivity under the pressure of philosophic doubts cast on the competence of the senses. It found an environment no longer emotionally satisfying, but one it came to resent fiercely and tried to redress by devices like Rimbaud's "disarrangement of the senses". Above all, this environment left him with no *point d'appui* but his own subjectivity. It was not felt as connatural to him, it no longer shared its being with him and all mankind, and it left him suspended in a sensuous vacuum. It compelled him to the impossible claim that—and Maritain sees this very clearly—poetry was knowledge of the same sort as science.

If this diagnosis is correct, there is no easy remedy. When Jacques Maritain talks of the poet refinding himself in the centre of his personality he is using exact terms which will be understood inexactly. He means by personality something deeper than intellect and feeling, but before this can be freed, both mind and will must feel themselves dealing with an object native to both. The question of emotion is crucial: and one feels that Maritain overstresses the intellectual side. He suggests the recovery of something analogous to melody in music, which I feel can only mean a sense of unity with all life, and which cannot be achieved merely by wishing for it. We have still many lessons to ponder in D. H. Lawrence. A passage like the following, for instance, almost redeems a lot that is cheap and far-fetched in his critique of science in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*. It was written from within a sense of unity achievable if not yet achieved, and, if not his best writing, is among his most significant:

The stars were marvellous in the soundless sky, so big, that one could see them hanging orb-like and alone in their own space, yet all the myriads. Particularly bright the evening star. And he hung flashing in the lower night with a power that made me hold my breath. Grand and powerful, he sent out his flashes, so sparkling that he seemed more intense than any sun or moon. And from the dark, uprising land he sent his way of light to us across the water, a marvellous star-road. So all above us the stars soared and pulsed, over that silent, night-dark, land-locked harbour.

Lawrence was feeling his way back to the Chaucerian world, although some of the materials with which he tried to patch up the gaps between himself and that world strike one as a rag-bag of incongruities. His approach was bold and perhaps too passionate, that of the later Eliot tentative and almost too discriminating. Their achievement has not yet been digested by

their contemporaries, but merits the attention of a literary criticism conscious of its responsibilities, and aware of the creative snags that almost paralyse the work of the poet writing today.

JOHN DURKAN.

THE CLAIMS OF BASIC ENGLISH

WITH AN APPENDIX ON BASIC AS A METHOD OF TEACHING

Basic English and Basic Culture

THE attitude to be adopted towards Basic English is something more than a mere point of view, a private opinion on a particular subject. It is part of one's attitude towards culture in general. That is to say, the acceptance of Basic English by an organization such as the British Council as another string to its bow, or as a new streamline arrow for its quiver, would imply the acceptance by it of a particular attitude towards culture. In this essay I propose to enquire both what this attitude is and what, if we agree to accept it, the probable effect will be upon British cultural expansion abroad.

As its name implies, Basic English is a synthetic, or at least a composite, product: British, American, Scientific, International, Commercial. To quarrel with a string of names would be idle; but the choice was not made without deliberation, and there were evidently good reasons for rejecting the word Cultural in favour of Commercial, and perhaps also Social in favour of the rather unexpected Scientific. The selection was intended to throw light upon the uses to which Basic could be put; and these uses are the most important thing about it. In other words, Basic is a technique whereby the English and American language can be put to scientific and commercial use in the international sphere. That, at any rate, is its *raison d'être*. It is a method of speeding up the intelligence services of modern commerce.

It will be the principal theme of this essay to demonstrate that such a medium of communication, however widespread its adoption, could not survive for a moment the standard language from which it is built up; that its very utilitarian quality precludes this; and that its employment in the international sphere as a substitute for standard English must produce a strain upon English cultural expansion which the latter, already sufficiently tainted by the commercial cinema, ought not to be called upon

to bear. With regard to the first point, the Basic English advocates might protest their wholehearted agreement; yet I see little evidence in Professor Richards' reply to Miss Macaulay* that such agreement is at all unanimous, or even to be recommended. Meanwhile, the third point requires some elaboration.

Basic English and Broken English

While it would be wholly incorrect to assume that his case for Basic English is the best that can be made out for it, no one doubts that Dr. Richards, the friend and colleague of C. K. Ogden, is Basic's most formidable champion. It is Dr. Richards' opinion, voiced with some spirit, that the alternative to Basic English abroad is simply broken English; and he commits himself to the surprising statement that the learning of ordinary English by foreigners is an "appallingly heavy undertaking". This will surprise both a good many foreigners who have learnt English and a good many teachers who have taught them. Further, he speaks of the inhabitants of Canton and North China as using Basic as a "smooth and solid runway" rather than as a "barrier" (which is how he defines ordinary English); but surely a man who knows China and Japan as well as Dr. Richards knows them knows also that the Chinese and Japanese find in ordinary English no such "barrier", and would certainly not describe the learning of it as an "appallingly heavy undertaking", though we might say as much of the learning of their own languages. What Dr. Richards' pronouncement boils down to is this: because English cannot be learned by foreigners as it should be spoken, some method must be devised whereby it may be transformed into a language that can be spoken.

In referring to language "as it should be spoken" there is a tendency to assume a standard which does not, never did and never ought to exist. The speaking of broken English is not confined to certain sections of the English public, least of all to the illiterate (who often speak very good English); it is spoken at certain times by everyone without exception. The speaking of broken English—or, for that matter, of broken French or German—is not necessarily a sign of ignorance; it may merely be a sign of inarticulateness. And inarticulateness is a condition with which everyone, not least the intellectual, is at times afflicted; indeed, as we know, it afflicts the intellectual a great deal more than the unintellectual. The inarticulateness of a learner differs from that of another in that the former is at loss for a word whereas the latter is at a loss for the right word; but the difference is not in fact so extreme, for the feeling of loss is the same in each, though

* *Idle Fears about Basic English.*

in one case more acutely experienced because of an inability to repair it. In short, a living language is always to some extent being broken because it is always to some extent being put together. If language were a continuous "reel", capable of being "run off" by the mere act of volition, this would not be so; but just as each person builds up his language as he goes along, so the verbal structures of each person and each social level differ perceptibly one from another. In short, the average foreigner must neither expect nor be encouraged to speak as we do. Unless he is a linguistic genius, such "perfection" will always appear slightly grotesque.

Culture and Utility

There are some people who hold that the purpose of cultural expansion is simply the development of commercial interests. That the spread of a language may facilitate economic dealings is obvious; but if it is regarded in this light only, language must soon lose its cultural significance. A living language will flourish abroad only if the source of its life, which lies in the mother-country, is healthy; from this source its vitality must perpetually be drawn. Moreover, the idea of spreading a language abroad must always be to some extent disinterested; it must be spread for its own sake, and not for any immediate advantage. The values of culture are absolute values; and therefore cultural expansion must never be regarded as anything but a good in itself. Once it is employed as the "avant-garde" of trade, etc., it will inevitably become corrupted. The expansion of French culture, for instance, has far outrun any narrow utilitarian object; and it is significant that, in spreading the French language, no resort has ever been made to a system of Basic French. Now, as most foreigners would agree that French is a great deal harder to learn than English, the resort to a mechanical and artificial English is even less excusable. Basic is not the alternative to broken English; it is itself debased English. And its advocacy betokens a waning faith in our national culture. For if that culture can no longer be exported pure, the inference is that it has become provincialized to the level of a regional culture; in short, that it has partially failed of its civilizing mission.

The Paradox of Culture

This is the Paradox of culture: that it can only become universal if it is first local. The provincial, on the other hand, is the local turning back upon itself. So long as a culture is securely rooted in one place, its branches may stretch where

they will. There is therefore a particular risk in *advertising* a culture at a moment when cultural activity in the mother country is at an exceptionally low ebb; the man who cannot make good at home emigrates. To conceal the precarious state of things at home will serve no purpose but to render it still more precarious; but if an organization such as the British Council is not to become a Marketing Board of cultural activity it must resolutely refuse to deal in such patent medicines as Basic English. The least we can do, at a time of disintegration like the present, is to prevent our language from becoming a labour-saving device for the use of hurried commercial travellers or members of international committees; for, as we shall see, such a device will not make for that precision of thought and intention in international matters which is so much to be desired. On the contrary, it will make for imprecision, misunderstanding, and distrust. In striving to bridge the language-gulf, it will only widen it. But this is anticipating.

The Bifurcation of Language

Like most scientific products, or I should say extra-scientific products (products born of science but out of wedlock, like Technocracy or Sociology), Basic English is the illegitimate offspring of Logical Positivism. It presupposes a distinction with which Professor I. A. Richards made great play in his celebrated *Principles of Literary Criticism*: namely, that between scientific language and "emotive" language. This distinction in turn goes back to Whitgenstein, founder of the school of Logical Positivism, and further back still to Hume. Now once you introduce such a radical distinction *within* the sphere of language you very soon find language coming to pieces in your hands, the distinction having cut too deeply. As a result, the two separate halves begin to assume an independent existence, each endeavouring to render itself self-sufficient of the other. On the one hand, that is to say, you get referential language, which is held to be the only kind that is truly intelligible; and on the other hand you get irrational language, which is held to convey nothing logical at all. Now the language of science is referential; the language of metaphysics, theology, poetry, and anything which you happen to regard as nonsense, is emotive. And the object of Basic English is to be an adequate vehicle of the former and an adequate guard against the latter.

Basic as "Scientific" Language

Needless to say, this distinction between two types of language is one of which the arbitrary nature has not yet been

fully realized. It is in fact a dogma. The way to demonstrate the inadequacy of a dogma, whether in science, theology or politics, is to treat it not so much with scepticism as with respect; that is, to try one's best to believe in it and, in so doing, to see where such submission leads you. (The opposite method, namely to try to disbelieve in it—the sceptical method upon which free thinkers rely so much—proves nothing at all: the prisoner is condemned from the start.) Let us, then, examine at least two of the implications of this dogma. First of all, if we believe in it we must pretend that we fail to understand any form of poetry, unless that poetry is capable of being “boiled down” to Basic: and we must further pretend that what it has “lost” in this process of reduction is so much dross, flummery or decoration. Now this attitude involves the kind of mental contortion which cannot be kept up: at least, it is an attitude which cannot be assumed with ease outside the lecture-room or the study.* And it must be admitted that an attitude of such restricted plausibility is the reverse of that which the advocates of Basic English are supposed to wish to inculcate; they are all for going out into the market-place, into the International Court at The Hague, into the International Labour Office, and in short into everything international. (They will throng the lobbies of the Peace Conference.) And a second implication is this: we have to try to believe that when we speak Basic English (if anyone ever does) we are holding discourse purged of everything save pure rationality; that any inflexion of voice or gestural accompaniment is an accident, even an impediment, certainly no more than an extra, with which we shall some day learn to dispense. This, too, is to adopt an attitude in which it is impossible to acquiesce without suspending our belief in a great many things which we know to be self-evident. In fact, however, a certain degree of emphasis is always admitted by Basic English advocates; and a technique has been evolved of “weighing” individual words. This covert recognition of the importance in language of something other than mere counters proves of great significance. It implies the further recognition, however implicit, that *verbal* language is no more than a highly specialized abstraction—an abstraction cultivated with great care and deliberation, but dispensed with on almost all occasions of great emotional tension, when, as we correctly say, “words fail us”—from a wider or “total” language. Now this total language involves the whole body, not merely the larynx. And it involves the whole body at every moment of speech.

* Professor Broad of Cambridge aptly defines a “stupid” theory as one that could only be entertained in the lecture-room or the study.

What Basic Claims to Do: (1) Elucidate

To perceive this truth is to see through Basic English to the web of assumptions and dogmas which underly it. Basic English turns out to be not of the base but of the superficies; it is essentially parasitic upon standard or ordinary English. This can be observed, or deduced, from a comparison of any ordinary prose-passage with its "rendering" into Basic. Such a comparison is made later. In effecting the change the advocates of Basic English claim to have preserved the *exact* meaning of the passage: a claim which, on examination, turns out to mean *all that the writer or speaker need have said had he wished to speak straightforwardly*. I shall likewise have occasion to refer to this claim later. That many a passage of English might have been written or spoken more effectively is obvious. And Basic may often do the trick. But to suggest that every passage in literature can be made to disclose "what it really means" by putting it into a verbal strait-jacket (with certain "let outs"), and cutting away everything that resists such pressure, is absurd. In fact it is demonstrably false. Except by coincidence, the Basic English version is *never* what the writer really means. Meaning is not involved. It is simply all that Basic English can conceive him to have said.

What Basic Claims to Do: (2) Abridge

In spite of its extravagant claims to brevity, Basic renderings almost always exceed their originals by about one-sixth: a fact to which the advocates of Basic are very careful not to draw attention. A *précis* in ordinary English can beat it every time, and preserve the essential meaning. In that respect it is not terse and "handy"; on the contrary, it is exceedingly cumbersome and awkward. And a language which, with a tenth of the words at its disposal, takes longer to say anything than that which it claims to surpass, is bound to be exceedingly monotonous. So much for its much-vaunted "efficiency".

What Basic Claims to Do: (3) Eliminate Emotion

Carefully examined, a passage in Basic is found not to lack emotional tone. In deed, its tone, if we like to listen for it, is very apparent, if very "mono". But the kind of emotion with which it is charged is that which invariably accompanies any scientific exposition where "plain facts" are being enunciated. It is above all the emotional tone which experimental scientists have sought to adopt during the last hundred years; in short, it is the emotional tone of a particular tradition or climate of scientific thought. This tradition starts, as everyone knows, a great deal earlier

than Hume; but in Hume it first became explicit, at least in English thought; and it is with English that we are concerned. The philosophical Radicals continued it; the Analytical school at the beginning of the present century refined and rarefied it; and the Logical Positivists of our own day (Messrs. Ogden and Richards among them) sanctified it.

It might be pointed out, in parenthesis, that, before Hume, scientists adopted a very different "tone" in their works. The earliest, like Lucretius, wrote in poetry; Galileo, Newton, and Kepler wrote in the language of works of devotion. The "bifurcation of nature", as Whitehead calls it, with its "closing of nature to mind", might be regarded as chiefly responsible for the change. After that the scientist felt himself obliged merely to consider "facts", natural facts, leaving the mind (if he believes in its autonomous existence at all) to the divines, the poets, and later on to the psychologists. And when he perceived these latter to be exalting the "mental sphere" to excess, he hurriedly invented his own brand of psychology, Behaviourism, according to which "mental" facts were shown to be physical or natural after all, and Thought itself became no more than a "laryngeal habit". These considerations lead us to the following conclusion: namely that Basic English, besides transforming the emotional tone of any particular passage, has not other aim but to do this. In seeking to reproduce what the writer or speaker really meant to say—that is, what the Basic English advocates think he ought to have said—the meaning is invariably changed. The evidence is there, in every passage that one likes to examine. For it is precisely the *tone* of a passage which gives a clue to its meaning, its whole meaning. Indeed, it is to the tone of a speaker or writer that we pay greatest attention in order to judge whether or not we are sure of his meaning. So important is tone, in short, that it is this, rather than the employment of particular words, that determines whether or not we choose to take offence (or otherwise) at a person's remarks. "It was the way he said it that I objected to," we remonstrate; or "I didn't like the sound of what he said," or even, "I don't like the way he puts things."

But, not to appear unwilling to examine chapter and verse, let us take an example of such a change of meaning from a passage which the Basic English advocates are, at the moment, particularly fond of quoting. I refer to the opening lines of the Atlantic Charter: a document of which, as everyone will admit, it is important to grasp the true meaning. The question of brevity can be settled quickly enough. In the original, the passage beginning "The President of the United States", and ending "the disarmament of such nations is essential", occupies 129

words. The Basic English version, on the other hand, occupies no less than 149 words.

To condemn Basic English out of hand merely because it cannot reproduce the opening of (say) the Atlantic Charter as *briefly* as its original authors would be unfair. All that I wish to ask, as a matter of some importance, is wherein the Basic rendering can claim to possess advantage over the original in characteristic *other* than brevity. For that is the crucial point. And while I do not wish to exalt brevity higher among the values of expression than it deserves, I at least invite those who are interested to ask themselves what it is that Basic English, in saying something longer, says better. What merits, as compared with the original, does Basic English exhibit which justifies its relying upon more verbose, more protracted, expression?

Basic English as a "Supplement" to Ordinary English

We may therefore ask: what are the qualities which should characterize language if it is to become a reliable vehicle of exposition? For these qualities are evidently those of which Basic English possesses a monopoly, or at least marked superiority over Standard English, if it is to justify its claim to extract the true (not "essential") meaning from any particular specimen of prose. It will, I hope, be apparent here as well as elsewhere that I do not criticize Basic English for doing something that it never claims to do; or at least that the Government does not think it capable of doing. Basic English is said to provide a "Supplement" to Standard English. Now the Basic rendering of "supplement" is "addition". And here at once we have a striking example of the invariable "loss" of meaning involved in effecting a Basic rendering: for "supplement" is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as a "thing added to supply the *deficiencies* of something else" (my italics). Thus, of the two concepts present in this definition, i.e. that of "addition" and that of "completion" or "compensation", only the first is present in the Basic rendering: the more important of the two is left entirely unexpressed. And therefore, employing the word "supplement" according to its definition in the Oxford Dictionary, we must judge Basic English by its claim to do something which Standard English cannot do so well. So we are back again at the question: what is this thing? And what quality is Basic English thought to possess which enables it to achieve its end? Now I presume that this quality can only be that which I previously mentioned as being the suspected claim of Basic English: namely that it succeeds in rendering "all that the writer or speaker need have said had he wished to speak straightforwardly". What other

claim, in fact, can it put forward? I have already asked, but hitherto left as rhetorical, the question what are the essential characteristics of good prose, excluding for the time being that characteristic to which Basic English can make no claim: namely brevity. The answer is obvious. Good prose is that form of prose which expresses the writer's meaning in as straightforward a manner as possible: the implication being that while most prose fails to do this, Basic succeeds. Thus, we are invited to assume that what the Basic version of anything *omits* to convey is what the author intended in his original to form something distinct from the vehicle of communication. This something is the dross, flummery, or decoration of which I spoke earlier: it is something which appeals to our emotions rather than to our intellects; in short, it is supererogatory to that "scientific" or rational meaning which, according to Basic English advocates, is the only kind of meaning worthy of attention.

How Meaning is Changed

Let us put this to the test. In the Basic rendering of the passage from the Atlantic Charter to which I referred just now there occur the following words: "They believe all nations of the world, for realistic as well as for spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force." These words are rendered in Basic English in the following way: "It is their belief that all nations of the earth, for material reasons no less than because it is right and good, will in the end give up the use of force." At first glance the difference between the two versions appears slight, the meaning identical; but closer examination, particularly of the subordinate clause, reveals that this is not so at all. Leaving aside the substitution in the final phrase of "will" for "must", we cannot refrain from drawing attention to the substitution for "realistic" and "spiritual" of "material" and "right and good". These concepts, however much they may resemble one another, do not mean the same thing, and the use of the latter in place of the former results in an actual change in meaning. In the case of "realistic" and "material" this change is very apparent, though loose thinking may have dulled the public into accepting the two terms as synonymous. Nor will it do to point out, what is even so not quite true, that the meanings "come to the same thing" or even "do not matter very much anyway"; if Basic English cannot lay claim to exactitude, its *raison d'être* vanishes. To come, then, to the actual difference in meaning: when nations act for "material reasons", they act from motives of personal profit or gain; in other words, they consult their own interests. When they act from "realistic"

reasons they act from a clear and unprejudiced view of the situation, having rid themselves of the *illusion* that such and such a course will be for their gain. The whole direction of meaning is different. To act from realistic reasons may well be to act from material reasons also; but to act from material reasons may not necessarily be to act from realistic reasons. As usual, the Basic version loses something vital. And it loses something in its rendering of "spiritual" as that which is concerned with "right and good". I suspect that if Messrs. Churchill and Roosevelt had been concerned merely with what is "right and good" they would have said "moral" reasons. The word "spiritual", of course, contains within it the notion of moral; but it puts morality upon a basis higher than that which the world considers to be right and good; the implication of the word in this context is that man has an immortal soul, and that his destiny is on a plane above the material. This may possibly be an error; but Basic English is supposedly concerned not with telling authors what they ought to mean but with conveying what they do mean.

Two Theories of Language

This introduces a point of great importance for the theory of language. According to certain theories (not always consciously formulated), words are to be regarded simply as counters, the meaning of which can be manipulated at will by those who use them. These words are then thought of as being grouped in various relations forming their grammatical structure. In the process, though at what point is left indeterminate, certain words, adhering one to another, remain linked despite every effort on the part of theorists to detach them; these are the "surds" of language, or, as we say, "idioms". Idiom is regarded as an excrescence upon language, and thus posterior in formation to words and syntax.

Now it has become apparent during the last few years (largely perhaps under the influence of the aesthetic theories of Benedetto Croce) that this theory, put to the test, breaks down. The reverse is true. Language, even when most logical, is always expressive. What is logical and scientific in language is something which "grows up", and can only grow up, in an atmosphere of expressiveness. To attempt to dispel this atmosphere, this ambient breath, would be to leave logic high and dry, like a fish out of water. Language begins, in other words, by being chiefly the expression of emotion; only slowly, as we see in the case of the child, does it become articulate or "transparent" to thought. And at its most transparent pitch

the emotional charge is not less strong, but merely purer than at lower levels. In consequence, the idea that emotion or expressiveness is something *added* to thought, as a decoration or fancy wrapping, and therefore as easily removed, is a fallacy. Behind Basic English, and behind such new languages as Professor Hogben's "Interglossa", rests the false assumption that by abstracting from living speech a series of verbal counters, language can be manufactured in a pure state. The purity of such language resembles the whiteness of a skeleton.

The same criticism applies to the idea that the meanings of words can be manipulated at will by those engaged in using them. The meaning of a word is its history, the history of its uses; you can extend that history, you cannot repudiate it. What Basic English does is to select from the wealth of the English language its most essential words—words, that is to say, which carry the greatest "burden" of meaning—and require them to continue to sustain this burden, to "mean" as much, in isolation from their context. Clearly, this is too much to ask. Words that breathed freely in the rich atmosphere of living English are unable to survive unimpaired in the synthetic atmosphere of Basic: either they must maintain themselves by artificial respiration or they are doomed to perish from inanition. Experience of both teaching and learning Basic English shows that, instead of leading to a fuller enjoyment of speech or literature, as it logically should, it cannot escape from its own circle of restricted intelligibility. It is the irreducible minimum of language trying to do duty for language functioning at maximum pressure; since literature is language exploited to the full. Thus the rendering into Basic of a work of literature is nothing but a complete evisceration of the text, a linguistic "cadre", wired together, forming a kind of model or blue-print of the original. The extent of the damage inflicted is best seen in the case of the Basic rendering of a play of Shaw, such as *Arms and the Man*. Shaw's prose, at its best, is entirely free from affectation and fulsomeness; it errs, if anything, on the side of plainness. But how much life, vigour, and sparkle it contains may be judged from a comparison between the original and a version in Basic. The latter, I think it will be agreed, achieves a degree of flatness calculated to extinguish interest in the most enthusiastic student.

To those of us who know English, a passage in Basic is seen to exhibit a certain vivacity simply because we happen already to be familiar with the words; we recognize them, as Dante recognized his friends and enemies in hell, because we have previously met them outside the limbo in which they are

forcibly confined. To those who do not know English this advantage is denied. To such people a word is no more than a counter, persevering in its meaning through one context after another, and trying in vain to acquire the life and weight with which it was formerly endowed. Enthusiasts maintain that Basic English, skilfully written, can acquire a degree of rhythm and movement, even of colour, which we expect of language at its best; it has also been pointed out that certain English lyrics are almost Basic in their verbal economy. Agreed; or rather, agreed with qualifications. You can always arrange words skilfully in order to produce an effect pleasing to the ear; and a poet may write lyrics happening not to contain words absent from the Basic list. This is being done every day. But what is verse by design is only poetry by accident. Verse is not poetry simply because in verse the rhythm is deliberately imposed from without; the framework is there to be "filled". And you can observe the same thing happening in any rendering of Basic. As to preserving the rhythms of the original, Basic can do little or nothing at all; and, as we have shown, such failure to capture the rhythmic tone of a passage is nothing less than to lift the meaning out of its native atmosphere, and to present it in altered guise. Writers of blue-books, company reports, and scientific theses may imagine that what they are producing is something akin to pure prose; that is to say, unvarnished conceptual enunciation. In this they make a great mistake. Pure conceptual communication is a figment. Authors of government publications, directors of companies, and scientific investigators are not persons lacking in emotion; still less are they persons who, during the period in which they are engaged in their specific tasks, succeed in putting their emotions aside; they are in fact most emotional when most professionally absorbed. But their emotions are more specific and rarefied than those of so-called "emotional" people. They may also be more profound (which does not imply better), because the emotions of emotional people are proverbially unstable, superficial, and easily influenced, just as the tempers of temperamental people are, of all their faculties, the least prone to consistency.

Language the Begetter of Thought

It follows, therefore, that we do not first have thoughts and then proceed to entertain feelings in regard to them; what happens is that we first have feelings, out of which thoughts or concepts grow. But, as I have already said, thought, in undergoing development, does not leave feeling behind; the growth of thought is the growth of feeling too, assuming growth to

mean progress in maturity. Now feelings are feelings only in so far as they are registered as such: hence language, the registrar, originates with consciousness itself. When conceptual thinking occurs it takes place always within a matrix of feeling, and can live only within that matrix. To interpret the existence of conceptual thinking as meaning that such thinking, once achieved and practised, can thereafter be induced to function *in vacuo*, is to assume that a plant can live without nourishment, or a body breathe without air. And yet that is precisely what all scientific or rational languages claim to be able to do. In fact, however, what sustains these languages is the *élan* of the living languages from which they spring; as I pointed out above, they appear to exhibit life only because we see in them the ghosts of their former selves.

Conclusion

To probe deeper into a subject which many people do not suspect to contain such depths would be to write a whole thesis upon aesthetics. And Basic English may be thought unworthy of such extended treatment. But questions of language raise problems far greater in scope than those of any other branch of aesthetics; the *social* implications, in which no one can fail to be interested, are enormous. The extent to which language and culture are interlinked, if not identical, was the subject with which I began; it is also a subject with which, apart from a short appendix, I must conclude. The Culture which we possess, and to the merits of which we are endeavouring to draw attention, must on no account be identified with a branch of thought which, though still popular in certain academic circles, belongs to an era which is past and done with. I refer to the tradition, if that can be called a tradition which is really a heresy, of abstract scientific thought; a tradition born of the material achievements of science from the seventeenth century onwards, and endowed with such prestige that it finally came to invade and corrupt all spheres of thought. To attack the abstract method in itself would of course be foolish; abstract thought, or rather our capacity for abstract thinking (which is quite different from abstruse thinking), is a capacity of which human beings may be said to possess the monopoly. To man alone, we may suspect, is given the faculty of entertaining notions of the State, Happiness, Being, Good, Duty and so on. It is he alone also that can occasionally blind himself to the fact that an abstraction is an abstraction; that, having abstracted, may begin to cavil about the precise relation between that which he has withdrawn from the concrete and the concrete-itself; that, hav-

ing "taken off" from land and risen high above the clouds, may come to deny that the earth any longer exists, to believe that it is an illusion, a "fiction", a wish-fulfilment, or a superstitious dogma. See, for instance, Weiniger's *Die Philosophie des Als Ob*, and much of the German philosophy that followed.

Such abstraction, as I have pointed out more than once, is at the root of Basic English. And it is therefore not a matter for surprise to find that the most extravagant claims are advanced on its behalf. In Dr. I. A. Richards' recent *Basic English and Its Uses* (Kegan Paul), for example, an attempt is made to show that, while languages will continue to develop on their own lines, an international language is not merely necessary but, as far as we can see, already in existence. According to Dr. Richards, this international language is English; and it will continue to be English, Dr. Richards says, "with or without Basic". This is a most illuminating statement. We suspect, in other words, that if English can continue, hand in hand with Basic, to be the one real international language, then it can well continue to be so without Basic, even as a supplement. In any case, a "supplement" is not likely to be of such great use in international matters as is generally supposed. For if Basic really succeeded in providing a common denominator of speech, it would cease to be a supplement and assume the status of the main language; supplementary material, if needed, would be derived from the standard language from which Basic is derived. The operative word in Dr. Richards' statement is surely "continue". Continue as what? If as a "living" language, no supplement would be required; if as a dead language, no supplement would be effective. English as living language can spread only in so far as it is accompanied by English culture; it is in fact nothing but that culture in its most splendid manifestation. To imagine that English culture could spread in the absence of the English language is impossible; the British Council for one has never lost sight of that truth. Substitute for this language a code, a mechanical technique, and you are likely to do something to English cultural expansion abroad from which it might never recover. Forcibly to limit the range and play of the language in which the world's greatest literature has been written; which still carries the authority of that literature; and which, precisely because of the richness derived therefrom, bids fair to becoming the chief international language, is to fling away advantages won painfully over a period of hundreds of years. The "prestige" of which General Smuts spoke recently as likely to be Britain's chief asset after the war is nothing if not *the prestige of a culture that, in spite of dilution, vulgarization, and neglect,*

has proved itself sound. And civilian morale is only a symptom of that soundness. So that we might legitimately say that the force that will finally have won the war of ideology in the West will not be England, or America, or even a military combination of the two, but something more profound and powerful than either, if common to both: namely English.

APPENDIX

It seems appropriate, at the conclusion of the present essay, to add some remarks upon Basic English as a method of teaching foreigners. For it is assumed, almost without challenge, that among the methods of teaching English, the Basic Way is that which is most easily imparted. The following remarks are based upon personal experience of using the method with students as different in temperament as Poles, Turks and Iraqis. My conclusions, which I give here for what they may be worth, are as follows:

(1) *That Basic English is Not Learned Quickly*

Although it is claimed that Basic English is rapidly acquired, I personally have found the exact opposite. Progress is slow, difficult, and held up by absurdities which the least intelligent student can hardly fail to detect; and what is acquired seems, upon inspection, to be a specialized technique rather than a language. Moreover, it is a technique with very limited and indeterminate application. I rather suspect, in fact, that those who write books on (or in) Basic English do not always realize that their own problems are very different from those confronting the student. Such writers come to their task with a complete, and sometimes (as in the case of Dr. Richards) unusual, knowledge of English; the student knows, or is supposed to know, no English at all. Secondly, such writers are engaged in providing an *abstraction* from what they know; the student is expected to accept this abstraction as something concrete, something with which he is expected to "make do", something which he may later build upon. Thirdly, such writers voluntarily impose upon themselves a discipline, and derive no little exhilaration from observing how briefly they can express a number of different concepts: their pleasure is that of contrast. No such luxury is open to the student, who is able to "read into" the selection of verbal counters at his disposal none of the associations accessible, and indeed assumed, by the writer. As an "antidote to loose thinking and catch-phrases", therefore, Basic is of little use save to those who know too much English to stand in need of its discipline, and likewise to those who

know too little to be guilty of obscurity and indulgence in rhetoric. Paradoxically enough, it is "catch-phrases" (understanding that term to include idiom) which the student, as opposed to the scholar, needs most urgently to acquire; and a language so ruthlessly purged of idiom as Basic English is therefore that which is least adapted to his needs. Let the student begin by "catching" as many "phrases" as he can; later on, when he knows enough English to be in a position to abuse it, there will be time and occasion to caution him against triteness. Since the abuses of which the beginner may be guilty need injure no one, least of all himself, there is little danger that his speech will need pruning. The important thing with the beginner is to make him talk, make him chatter, if you like. Later on, the inevitable excrescences will fall away. He will have "talked them off".

(2) *That it Does Not Enable the Student to Understand Other People*

To imagine that Basic English will enable the student to understand other people—unless these other people voluntarily consent to restrict their own vocabulary to his level—is erroneous. At most, Basic English enables the student to convey a limited number of his wants. These wants could in most instances be conveyed equally well by gestures. It is significant, in this connexion, that most text-books of Basic English begin by "translating" a series of bodily gestures (some of them rather outlandish) into speech-counters.

(3) *That it Fails as a "Transition" Stage to Ordinary English*

Finally, it would be interesting, I think, to challenge the advocates of Basic English to produce a single foreign student who has succeeded in learning English with no other assistance than that provided by this method. I suspect that no such person exists; that if he ever existed, his efforts to communicate in English with other people would be so arduous as to compel him, before many weeks were out, to get down to learning proper English; and that in any case the time required for mastering Basic English (which is declared to be from six to eight months) were far better spent in learning an equal amount, or more, of ordinary English. I am aware that books have been published with the object of showing how, if necessary, the transition may be effected from Basic to English proper. One cannot refrain from applying the same test as that which was made use of earlier in the present essay. If the transition is desirable at all, then why not dispense with its necessity by learning proper English from the start? If it is not always

desirable, then why is it envisaged as being necessary? Those who are anxious to learn English will want to learn the kind of English that English people speak. One feels that, in the end, opposition to Basic English will come not so much from Englishmen as from foreigners. They just will not tolerate it. And they will be quite right.

E. W. F. TOMLIN.

YOUNG CATHOLICS AT THE UNIVERSITIES

AMONG Catholics, and especially here in England, the appreciation of the formation of a sound and vigorous intellect is a factor too often neglected, too often discarded as highbrow and unpractical." So wrote Dom Theodore Wesserling in *Unitas*, the monthly organ of the University Federation of Great Britain, and what he says is true. We may remind ourselves of the definition of the liturgy given by the Archbishop of Edinburgh and St. Andrews: "The liturgy is the supreme Act of Sacrifice offered by Christ Himself to the Eternal Father, with which act the faithful, as members of Christ's Mystical Body, are privileged to associate themselves and the offering of themselves and all that they are, as living members united to their Divine Head." Highbrow? Unpractical? To be liturgical is to be Christian. To have an exclusive concern with the proper rendering of the chant, with rubrics, with the cut of vestments, is not to be liturgical at all. It is to mistake the shadow for the substance, the clothes which are most fitting for him by his nature and dignity to wear, for the man himself. Liturgy means the full Christian life, the restoration of all things in Christ on all levels of human activity, including the intellectual. "Benedicam Dominum qui tribuit mihi intellectum!"

We are concerned to discover what qualities the Catholic student should possess and what kind of education can best prepare him for university life.

Writing on this subject, Fr. John Baptist Reeves, O.P., has said: "Those Catholics who go to Universities whether to learn or to teach must before all else possess, or be taught to possess, their religion as an exact science and a full culture." To possess it as an exact science means that it must be treated as the object of life-long study, that it must be investigated with the same scholarly habits of mind as any other branch of knowledge, and that just as no university teacher can advance his subject without research, so the Catholic student cannot advance Catholicism by

being content to hand out its truths undigested and undeveloped by his intelligence. To possess religion as a full culture means to be disciplined and cultivated by it. The Catholic student must have not only his mind, but also his instincts, informed by the values of Catholicism. He must develop a Christian norm of judgement which is an expression of the unity and vitality of his faith.

Unfortunately, it cannot be said that every young Catholic who goes to the university today possesses his religion as an exact science or a full culture. In spite of developments in pedagogic technique applied to the teaching of religion—in spite, even, of an attempt to put the Mass “in the middle”—we have not yet created a body of young opinion founded in Christ and consciously of owning its meaning and integrity to active and loving participation in His life of redemption in the world. We still have the Catholic student who possesses his faith as a comfortable set of formulae. It is not surprising that he is afraid of “losing the Faith” when it has so little vital connection with him, and when it is so dull! Ready-made answers and slick apologetics cut no ice in the intellectual world. Educators who instil into would-be students the necessity for “knowing how to answer the Protestant and the Communist”, and who do not at the same time seek to cultivate an unimpeachable intellectual honesty, are pursuing a short-sighted policy and one which can do untold harm. Where there is no zeal, on the other hand, a tabloid-form predigested Catholicism swallowed on Sundays with a dose of Devotions leads to that Jekyll and Hyde, sacred and secular, Catholic personality which is a manifest travesty of the Christian ideal.

The young Catholic who has begun to grow up spiritually and intellectually will not be content with such a religion and he will either make an effort to explore its possibilities or he will abandon it for something more exciting. There are far too many Catholics in the Communist society of at least one university, and they are not there to convert their comrades by getting to understand them at close quarters. They have discovered a more exciting allegiance and in consequence have become the bitterest opponents of the old. Their mental development has gone ahead, they have passed their exams, been treated as adults, while the one factor which should have stimulated and guided their growth to a balanced and valuable maturity has been so catechism-wrapped and taken for granted that it has ceased to have any importance for them whatsoever. All their adolescent aspirations, perplexities, searchings for a pattern have been turned away from their religion because they have been taught first to

learn it, second to live it. They have not been shown how to *investigate* it as, perhaps, if they are lucky, they have been shown how to use a library to increase their knowledge of English literature. They have acquired the habit of guarding their religion and not venturing with it.

We are all disturbed by the leakage in the Church. It is occurring everywhere, among rich and poor, intellectuals and workers. The Catholic undergraduate is no exception, though the growth during fairly recent years at all the universities of chaplaincies and Catholic societies has contributed to the stabilizing and unifying of Catholic student life. The remedy for potential, or actual, "lapses" does not rest primarily with the chaplain. What can be done about it? Negative precepts will never rouse youth to a positive achievement. We might also temper our injunctions to "defend the faith" with a few cautions, or we shall find that the "Apologetic" habit of mind is upon us, and that we have put argument before affirmation, talking before living. It is a spirit totally opposite to that of liturgical prayer which reflects the Christ-mind in its quiet and prayerful affirmation of sublime truths. There are in the universities numbers of well-meaning, zealous Catholics who have developed this mental attitude with all its pitfalls. With the ardour that comes partly from finding themselves outnumbered, and partly from an inherited sense of religious inferiority in the face of opposition, they will attempt to down an opponent with more zeal than knowledge and will be embarrassingly worsted. They try to defend the Church from accusations and criticisms which are often true, and so give a sorry impression of their intellectual honesty. They believe that to admit ignorance of anything Catholic to a hostile critic is to disgrace the Church and so disgrace it by a lack of frankness and humility. They only too often mistake argument for discussion and assume that the "proofs" learnt in Apologetics lessons at school and repeated to a sceptic, give him a fair chance of appreciating the rational basis of Catholicism. So much good apostolic energy is wasted by this kind of Catholic Action.

Given a positive and dynamic ideal, a hard one, young Catholics would rise to it, even to one as hard as real Catholicism. Given a safety-first policy they will turn the Faith into a pillow or look out for something more exciting. As long as the Faith is bigger than they, they will try to grow to fit it, but as soon as it seems to them smaller and tamer than their growing adolescent selves they will decline to grow within it and it will gradually cease to have any vital connection with them at all. Even today, how often we hear the lapse of a Catholic student attributed to

the iniquities of the university and the bad influence of non-Catholic companions. These are not the cause, but the occasion, of students leaving the Church. The remedy lies with us, and in formulating a programme of education we must have in mind not merely the solution of this immediate problem but the formation of a basis of spiritual and intellectual development which shall make "growing up in Christ" a reality for all our young people, and not for students alone. We can never say that any educational scheme which we propose will infallibly anchor Catholics to the Church, or that it will guarantee the kind of development which we want to see, but the task of the Christian educator is to prepare the field for grace and to ensure that the outlook, atmosphere and training, moral, spiritual, intellectual, even physical, of his school are such that, focusing the attention on the adventure of putting on Christ, they in everything co-operate with the Holy Spirit in the educational process.

What are the aims of the Catholic school? They are neither to show the neighbours that Catholics can get as many scholarships as anyone else, nor are they to bring up "good Catholics" with no learning or culture. They are neither to compete with other schools which make matriculating the summum bonum and goal of their existence, nor are they to treat that part of the syllabus which has not explicitly to do with religion as of little importance. The aim of a Catholic school is to help the child to become another Christ, "*Christianus alter Christus*", which means that every subject taught, from music to cricket, must have its *raison d'être* in the Christ-life, must be "Christed" and taught in explicit relation to the whole plan of our divine adoption as "*coheredes Christi*". Not brain-growth or muscle-growth, or even soul-growth, alone can be the aim of a liturgical education, but all of them together. "*Crescamus in illo per omnia qui est caput Christus*". That is not to say that it is as important to understand the art of translating French as the art of prayer, but it is true that success in the latter will depend largely on the perspective in which the other is seen. It will be bad for the prayer if French be regarded as a stick with which to beat the examiner, or if it be dismissed casually as "only a secular subject". It is impossible to do all to the glory of God unless the effort of translating French be turned primarily to increasing the life of God in the translator. It is safe to say that if any subject on the syllabus of a Catholic school be treated as an activity which has no connection with the development of the human soul, it might as well be taken off it. The purpose of education must be kept constantly before the eyes both of the teacher and the taught, and generalizations about preparation for this life and the next are

not enough. What is necessary is that when Smith minor asks, "Why on earth do we have to learn English?" his teacher should not reply, "Because it's on the syllabus," or "Because every educated person has to." The answer should be in terms of eternal as well as temporal advantage. At the same time, he should make it clear that while spiritual considerations determine the purpose and value of the work, application to it requires the study of the principles governing its nature and operation which are peculiar to it. For instance, the teacher of voice-production will not encourage good speech because of its social or commercial value, but because it is not desirable that any of God's creatures should be making animal noises when they might make better use of their faculties and give glory to God in human, even beautiful, sounds. But that once understood, it is to breath-control, study of the speech apparatus, practice in speaking vowels and consonants, that he will turn his pupils' attention. It is essential for our education that we should remember this principle of human activity operating according to its own laws but directed towards the service of God and the pupils' vocation, growth in Christ. Its neglect must inevitably lead to a false perspective and lack of balance, to "unChristed" learning, or to a contempt for human culture.

A liturgical education rests on the very centre of the Christian life by its emphasis on the Mass, with its implications for members of the Mystical Body. Gradually but perceptibly the Mass is already taking its pre-eminent place in the teaching of religion; children are learning to answer and sing the Mass; they make their own small altars and vestments, but there is still room for a closer integration of religious and non-religious studies within the framework of a common vocation, as I have already suggested. It is not enough to teach children to "pray the Mass" *at Mass*, they must learn how their every action is an extension of that prayer offered in union with their Divine Head. They must be taught to see that the Mass is that point of contact between God and man, *totus Christus* and *homo sapiens*, from which the Divine life flows out into the world, that outside the Mass, living has no significance for the Christian for whom "to live is Christ, and to die is gain".

The keynote of this education is action; religion learnt and lived simultaneously; action profitable because springing directly from contemplation of the central "Mysterium Fidei". It emphasizes religion as a social affair, for membership one of another calls for working and worshipping together and liturgical prayer as the perfect vehicle for paying corporate homage to God. Equally it emphasizes it as a personal thing which calls for a

personal knowledge of and love for Our Lord, and this puts prayer in proper perspective, not as an irksome religious duty, but as the expression of a relationship and the condition of becoming more fully alive. The double emphasis is, perhaps, particularly important today, when the disintegration of our culture is making for depersonalization in the individual's life and for impoverishment in social relationships. In connection with the latter, a liturgical education should provide a powerful apostolate, first in the "the household of the Faith", for charity begins at home and spreads thence within the wider context of society. The Liturgy is the great Christian bond of unity, for Christ's members are united in it towards the end that He designs for them "Ut unum sint". Both charity and apostolic efficiency are served by such a consciousness of unity and should find expression in many different ways from the school choir that helps the parish with the liturgy to the individual Catholic's efforts on leaving school towards a generous and self-sacrificing work for the good of society. We could do with a far greater sense of responsibility among Catholics for concerning themselves with the lot of those with whom they may feel they have little in common, from whom they may have much to learn, to whom they have much to give.

A liturgical education is, of its nature, essentially *cultural*, which means that it is actively concerned with values and with the shaping of human beings in accordance with them. The norm of humanity which the liturgy presupposes is not religious man, a Sunday-worshipping being, but the whole man who can only become a "partaker of His divinity" if the whole of himself with all his instincts, affections, faculties and talents is involved in the process. (Hence the absence in liturgical prayer of sentiments which are not the most real and fundamental in human nature.)

A cultural education must minister to the perfection of the person undergoing it, though it is not the source of that perfection. Grace perfects nature, not learning, but human nature has potentialities to be developed through learning and creating; and it is only he who knows himself to be incorporated in Christ, who will never mistake means for ends, misunderstand the necessary God-centredness of Christian humanism or give his allegiance to the watchwords of the devil's party *l'éducation pour tout*, or "poetry alone is capable of saving us". And those who make the liturgy the basis of a Catholic education will repudiate that slightly Manichean distrust of natural culture which still makes some Catholics suspicious of the intellectual life. For the liturgical Christian there is no dichotomy between sacred and secular (though there may be tension). He aims at an integration of the

supernatural and its natural base in human nature, and at putting on Christ that he may see life whole and achieve in Christ his wholeness and holiness. That implies that his life in any vocation is concerned with understanding and evaluating. It is in this sense that a liturgical education is critical. He will learn to judge according to the values of Christ, which means that he will try to develop discrimination and perfect fairness. He will shun all partial criticisms, or partisanship, remembering that the un-Christlike is sometimes within the Church and the Christlike outside, where it is not only unlabelled but often heavily disguised.

To sum up, a liturgical education offers to the personality which is growing in obedience to psychological and physiological principles, a summons and a command to grow towards a Christian cultured maturity, to become human, to develop towards final union with God, in Whose divinity every Catholic may partake in the Mass, Whose redemptive work it is his personal obligation to further, and Who, unlike the modern employer, ensures that the work done for Him shall be life-giving and joyful.

This is an ideal which can be offered to youth because it is wholly positive: we can hope that it may produce young Catholics who may be real apostles in every department of our irreligious society and particularly in the universities, of which I shall now speak exclusively.

Today the universities reflect the chaos and frivolity of modern life and education. Their students have a diversity of aim, little knowledge of what being a student implies, little regard for the pursuit of truth, little philosophy but a great deal of energy, which is dissipated in ways which the Catholic who does not possess his religion as an exact science and a full culture may, and does, often come to imitate.

A cross-section of university life would reveal the following somewhat dismal categories of students. First, political campaigners who use their university contacts for the spread of propaganda rather than for the discovery of truth and who usually achieve an inglorious academic record. (Anyone interested may read Mr. Truscott's lively denunciation of these in his book *Redbrick University*.) There are religious campaigners of the same kind, though their contempt for study is seldom as great as the "politicians,". Zealous Catholics are often among them pursuing a short-sighted policy of substituting excessive action in the "Cath. Soc." for contemplation of Catholic realities with which to make their action fruitful.

Secondly, there are those who do their work in a spirit of resignation to toil and burn their books immediately their final examination has set them free. These, unfortunately, are not only

those who become members of a university for the sake of its social life, but those who regard the acquisition of knowledge solely as a stepping-stone to some other object. Prospective teachers are much to blame. It would be well for Catholic students, especially those who intend to teach, to remember Newman's words: "Knowledge is not merely a means to something beyond it or the preliminary of certain arts into which it naturally resolves, but an end sufficient to rest in and to pursue for its own sake." All university students are not destined to become scholars, but they are no true students unless they remain students all their lives, and the teacher who arrests his own development in order to attend to that of other people is no true teacher. Incidentally, how contrary to the Government policy for the training of teachers is Coventry Patmore's remark: "No great art, no really effective ethical teaching can come from any but such as know immeasurably more than they will attempt to communicate."

Then there are the fact-grubbers, like those readers whom Coleridge compared to "sponges who absorb all they read and return it nearly in the same state, only a little dirtied". They are engaged on a work of uncritical receptivity, attending endless lectures, taking endless notes, preying on the intellectual life of the university and neither actively sharing in it nor increasing it. Of these and students who have no understanding of their purpose in a university, a Cambridge don has complained that they work as if they were doing their prep. and cram for their final exam. as if it were the School Certificate. This surely is a reflection on their schools.

These students lack ideas. Others possess nothing else. The opinionated student, who is usually a man (women are more inclined to be fact-grubbers!), reads much cursorily and boasts of doing no work. He learns nothing and is intellectually static. His is the opposite of that habit of mind which Newman says is formed in the university "which lasts through life of which the attributes are freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation and wisdom, or what I have ventured to call a philosophical habit".

A Catholic student who has profited by a liturgical education should possess the seeds of this philosophical habit as a result of his schooling. He will make mistakes, but he ought, at least, to be able to realize his privileges and obligations as a student. He will have learnt that Catholicism is best served by an affirmation of its doctrines and values in his conduct and through his work, and not principally or exclusively by trying to make converts; that all knowledge, though it may seem to have no religious significance, is worthy to be studied and that the attainment of

truth is an end in itself; that his function as an active member of Christ's Mystical Body is not to grub for facts but to exercise his mind on them critically and to apply them to the elucidation of truth. On the other hand, he will have learnt that criticism is not hole-picking and uncharitable partisanship, but evaluation according to the mind of Christ, which it must be his duty to discover, and make part of himself by prayer, reading and living the liturgical life of the Church.

In order to be real students, young Catholics have to be real men and women, and it should be their aim, and not theirs alone, to be "all things to all men". They will succeed only in so far as they allow their university life to widen their spiritual and intellectual horizon, developing a perfect integrity of mind capable of commanding attention by its generosity and sympathy. This integrity demands the cultivation not only of the theological virtues, with which Catholics sometimes seem to be exclusively concerned, but those natural virtues, honesty, justice, friendliness, courtesy which are understood and appreciated by our non-Catholic companions. The character that is formed without them is a house built on sand, and the lesson of the liturgy is that the supernatural must perfect the natural, of which it is not the antithesis but the consummation. In a university where contacts between Catholics and non-Catholics are particularly intimate, and may last long, this is a truth which must not escape our students. Without a realistic spirituality the Catholic student will not be a realistic intellectual, and he may be a menace rather than a blessing. Herbert Read, adapting Plato, in a recent book has said: "It is only on to a stock of goodness that knowledge can be safely grafted." Such goodness must be possessed and radiated by the university student if his knowledge is to be of value to himself and the community.

The student who has had a liturgical education recognizes in the Mass the pivot round which his life revolves. He knows that the *nature* of his life is not twofold, religious and secular, and that it is unified in the central, liturgical fact of the Redemption. He knows that the *aim* of his life is to work with Christ in the redemptive work and that it is that fact which gives meaning to the idea of vocation. He realizes that "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" means that he must first save his own soul and *also* that that is accomplished not by an unhealthy custody of his own religious self, but by trying to actualize all his potentialities in Christ directed and controlled by the values of Christ, and by living socially as a unit, though a fully human and responsible one, in a great living organism. By the time he goes to the university these realizations have provided him with a sure sense

of direction and the fundamentals of a standard of criticism springing directly from his philosophy. In his intellectual vocation his sincere aim is to learn with a lively curiosity and to cultivate powers of discrimination developing through his spiritual life into a Christian norm of judgement. His charity is not confined to refraining from gossip about his neighbour, it reaches to his zealous and sensitive attempts to evaluate and appreciate the ideas with which he comes in contact in order that he may seek truth and effect an integration of his religion and his studies. Always he will keep an open mind, but because he has strong convictions, and the conviction that of virtues "the greatest of these is charity", that will mean not a mind empty of beliefs or ridden by them, but one which they control and energize. It may be good for him to remember that remark of Cardinal Mercier: "*Nous ne sommes pas seuls en possession de la vérité et la vérité que nous possédons n'est pas la vérité entière*".

ROSEMARY COX.

PUGIN AT ALTON TOWERS

IT was early in the summer of 1832 that John Talbot, sixteenth Earl of Shrewsbury and Waterford, encountered in London the young Augustus Welby Pugin. Together they were destined to do much, both in the re-establishing of the newly emancipated Church of Rome and the restoration of Christian art. The year was thus an auspicious one.

Pugin was an Ariel amidst a host of Calibans. His fault, if fault he had—and this pertains to most of the Gothic Revival craftsmen—lay in his identifying Christian art solely with the Gothic school. The beauty of Greek and Roman architecture eluded him. He was insensitive to the symmetry of domes and pillars, to the noble effects of space, the harmony of masses and the grandeur of form. That his love of Gothic principles amounted to an obsession there is little doubt, for he could casually refer to his wife's delivery of "a Gothic child". It was as though his spirit had taken flight from a mediaeval cloister; as though he had lived in the twilight of the Middle Ages and, like a phoenix, had been reborn into the drab stagnant nineteenth century.

Though an artist of eccentric habits, he was ardent in his spiritual beliefs, and his nature was devoid of anything resembling that compromise between mysticism and sensuality which is so often characteristic of great artists. The question has often been asked as to whether the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins

had suffered because of his subjection to the Church. It would be fatuous to raise a similar query with regard to Pugin. Gothic to him was, by its inception and tradition, synonymous with the Church of Rome. His conversion did somewhat narrow his field of operations, however, for in his almost frantic efforts to reform the housing and ritual of an impoverished Church he neglected the domestic.

Whether art is better off as applied to industry and commerce than as the monopoly of plutocrats and dilettantes is a speculation beyond the scope of the present essay. Until the machine age, artists were largely dependent upon patrons among the wealthy classes, and the latter were often connoisseurs of taste and munificence. In John Talbot, Pugin found such a patron.

In 1836 he was invited to Talbot's main residence, Alton Towers, in north Staffordshire, with a view to additions and alterations. It is difficult to conjecture what were Pugin's reactions upon first seeing the vast exotic gardens. Even though he was essentially a mediaevalist with little sympathy for Hellenic tendencies, he must have been delighted by the classical riot. It was a scene Watteau might have painted, an image from Boccaccio. There were sculptured terraces; grottoes, pools, rustic bridges, cascades and fountains of ingenious shape; temples, monuments and follies. And, like some strange unexpected *décor* for a ballet, the towers and turrets and pinnacles of the Gothic hall in the background.

Pugin may have been consoled by knowing that the pagan embellishments were due to the previous earl, Charles Talbot, who in 1814 had begun to lay out the estate. It was said of him that "he made the desert smile". Charles died in 1827, and he lay with his chaplain in the chapel of Heythrop House in Oxfordshire, a country seat rebuilt by the impetuous Wyatt. John Talbot, on his succession to the earldom, removed what objectionable features existed and completed a harmonious picture. A saintly man given to scholarship and spiritual things, he "walked", as Marche Phillips de Lisle said of him, "through the gorgeous Halls of his glorious Palace as few poor men would pace the lowliest cabin".

The architect responsible for Alton was an obscure local craftsman named Fradgley, and it may seem surprising that he did not attain at least a regional fame like that of Smith of Warwick, Sanderson Miller of Radway, Thomas White of Worcester, Wood of Bath, John Pritchard of Llandaff and Harrison of Chester. Pugin must have felt some measure of admiration for this Fradgley who had conceived in this remote part of the country a style which had much affinity with his own.

Passing through the entrance-hall, one would have come into the armoury, a long gallery like a cathedral nave and lighted by stained-glass windows. Continuing along this, one passed through an open screen surmounted by a portcullis into the picture-gallery, which had an oak ceiling supported by light arches springing from corbels and mural panels emblazoned with the Talbot shields. These two galleries led into the octagon, an imposing if Beckfordesque model of a chapter-house in the Early English style. It was supported by a central clustered column and was lighted by tall lancet windows, while inlaid in the floor were reproductions of two altar-tombs—a little too dramatic and morbid a flourish for domestic environment. Westward lay the Talbot Gallery, communicating with the state apartments and an octagonal boudoir with a magnificently carved ceiling. Adjoining these lay the small dining-room containing a beautifully scrolled and gilded central lantern. Above this was the library, which was divided by open arches and possessed a ceiling of an unusually ingenuous beauty. Eastward lay the chapel, correctly orientated, lighted only by the east window and surmounted at the western end by an elegant slender tower. A lofty western gallery communicated with a terrace overlooking the courtyards. To the west lay the main dining-hall. Between the chapel and the state apartments lay the Long Gallery and drawing-room, forming a cross, from which a cloister-like passage led into the chapel.

With such an environment Pugin was, perhaps, as happy as his rather *gauche* nature would allow him to be. He could appraise the art collection of Madame Letitia Buonaparte, the mother of Napoleon, whose gallery in Rome John Talbot had purchased. He could admire the Spanish embroidered vestments, the church-plate of Cardinal Odescalchi and such *objets d'art* as the fifteenth-century lectern from Louvain. In addition to these he had accessibility to the unique private collection of Daniel Rock.

Dr. Rock met Talbot in Rome in 1825, and upon the latter's elevation to the peerage two years later he was called to Alton as domestic chaplain. The author of *Hierurgia*, written at Alton, he was the foremost ecclesiologist of his day. It was but natural that the friendship of Pugin and Dr. Rock should be a little strained by professional rivalry, for no other two contemporaries could have had such an unusual affinity, and it is significant that the latter, in his *The Church of Our Fathers*, made but one brief acknowledgement of "my friend, the talented Pugin".

The Church of Our Fathers was inspired by the old Sarum rite of St. Osmund, a transcript of which was in the possession of a Mr. Hatch, of Salisbury, whose son provided Dr. Rock

with a handwritten copy. That the younger Hatch was a friend of Pugin is certain, for the latter used to stay with him in Vicar's Close at Wells. One cannot but feel that Pugin was associated, however slightly, with Rock's monumental work, for at Alton they collaborated in several projects.

The reconditioning of the chapel, as was to be expected, was one of Pugin's earliest works here. The east window was refilled with stained glass of a richer colour and design, and against this was set a new high altar and reredos. High up in the south wall a small rose window was inserted. A side-altar was installed, together with several shrines for the reception of relics; a fine copy by Durantini of Raphael's *The Transfiguration* which was here some years ago was almost certainly post-Pugin. The walls were richly painted in the mediaeval tradition, and in this matter of mural decoration there is generally a marked similarity between the styles of Pugin and Fradgley, though the former may be distinguished by its flamboyancy and more spiritual feeling.

Pugin ensured that the liturgy in the chapel was celebrated in the traditional manner, and he designed vestments and altar ornaments and even studied plain-chant in accordance with these principles. It is quite conceivable that Dr. Rock viewed this trespassing upon his domain with some impatience and perturbation. It was in this chapel on 8 May, 1839, that Pugin's second wife was received into the Church by a strange colourful ritual which owed its unorthodox elements to Pugin's eccentricity. Here, too, John Talbot on his death in 1852 lay in state upon the resplendent Shrewsbury Catafalque (described in an *Illustrated London News* of 1852 and now in St. Chad's Cathedral at Birmingham).

The construction of the Doria apartments and the chambers above the west end of the great gallery seems to have next engaged Pugin's attention. To give access to these he introduced a light circular staircase in the small dining-room, an ingenious use of a small space and an indication of his talents as domestic architect.

It would appear that soon after this the main dining-hall, being inadequate both in form and style, was entirely rebuilt. For this Pugin took as his model the famous *Sainte Chapelle* in Paris. That there were some dissensions between the architect and his patron over this is clear, a stained-glass window and a screen more suited to a cathedral providing the basis of the earl's objections. But Pugin was adamant. "It shall never be said," he wrote, "that I have spoilt the dining-room at Alton; I would not do it for a thousand pounds." The hall was to include "a bay-window, high open roof, lantern, two good

fireplaces, a great sideboard, screen, minstrel-gallery—all or none". In this form it has survived, with the great window containing forty shields of arms, a magnificent open roof of oak, and the walls diapered in gold and brilliant colours, while from the roof rises a square embattled tower. King Edward VII said it was the finest room he had ever dined in.*

There remains the conservatory that was thrown from the octagon across to the Long Gallery. This is a wistful creation like a cathedral aisle, lighted by tall windows with delicate mullions but broken midway by the intervention of an adjoining octagonal building. Between these major operations Pugin was busily engaged in decorating various apartments, where his favourite mediums seem to have been gold, scarlet and black. He also panelled the small dining-room, diapered the Talbot Gallery and designed its west window, painted the Talbot arms on the immense doors of the armoury and probably designed four of the windows in the octagon. Of the exterior, he rendered the entrance more imposing by a sculptured balustrade flanking the steps, threw an embattled parapet around the south side of the building and erected the secondary entrance-lodge.

Meanwhile, the great age of Victoria Regina had begun. On that hot June day in 1838 Lady Mary Talbot was a train-bearer to Queen Victoria at her coronation. Perhaps the Talbot household marked the occasion with a ball. There must have been many such balls at Alton. The mind readily evokes the scene, which was, perhaps, sheer ballet in its setting and soft nuances of colour. The carriages, their yellow lamps pricking the dusky fragrant night, winding along the valley into the grey courtyard; the lovely Tennysonian women in dresses of satin over *gros de Naples* slips, with *corsages à la Grecque*, tiers of lace disposed *en mancheron* and skirts trimmed with *bonillons* and flounces of lace and bouquets of roses; the lights adding lustre to crystal and alabaster, bronze and inlaid wood. One sees the gallants, courtly and sartorially impeccable, waltzing through the galleries and manœuvring their companions into the cool shelter of the octagon. One senses the strange expectant mood and the silence as the old Welsh harpist whom the earl retained played an interlude. And there, perhaps, is the lank-haired figure of Pugin nervously edging away to the solitude of his chambers or the inspiration of the dim chapel, or, perchance, to seek Dr. Rock for a walk upon the terrace. The scene is an evanescent one.

Perhaps the gathering included the Marquis of Bute, translator of the Roman Breviary and several Coptic rites; Lady Gwendoline Talbot, the earl's saintly daughter; Prince Doria,

* This remark is recorded by Michael Trappes-Lomax.

the husband of Lady Mary Talbot; the Vavasours; Marche Phillips de Lisle, that "perfect Mediaeval man"; and Miss Amherst, the earl's niece, who broke off an unfortunate love-affair with Pugin and entered a convent. Among other guests at Alton were the Princess Borghese, Cardinal Wiseman and Disraeli, who, in his novel *Lothair*, featured Alton Towers under the pseudonym of *Muriel Towers*. It was a hospitable house. Newman and Faber called one day to find seven bishops there.

During these years Pugin shuttled between Alton and his bizarre house, St. Marie's Grange, near Salisbury. His days were full and commissions were mounting. Two of his finest churches were built during this period, St. Giles' at Cheadle and St. Chad's at Birmingham. The glory of St. Chad's was the rood-screen, over which Pugin engaged Wiseman in heated dispute, the former roundly declaring that "a man who had lived in basilicas for twenty-two years could scarcely be free from paganism".

The founding of Mount St. Bernard's Abbey was another project launched from the towers of Alton, though the man most instrumental in this was Marche Phillips de Lisle of Grace-Dieu Manor, where the chapel was fitted with a Pugin screen surmounted by the Rood of Syon Abbey and where another liturgical movement was set up by this triumvirate of ardent Christians. This Cistercian abbey remains largely in its stark Early English simplicity, and it is here apparent that Pugin was constantly forced to clock-towers, belfries and miniature campaniles, unlike Wyatt, with his flair (and resources) for ponderous towers.

The seeds of the Oxford Movement were taking root in the obdurate soil of Anglicanism; Manning sat reading St. Chrysostom by the lamp of his phaeton as he sped along the country lanes of Sussex by night; Newman was about to leave for Santa Croce; Victoria had joined hands with Albert, and the young Trollope was dreaming of *Barchester Towers*. Such was the age, yet Pugin was apathetic to all about him. Life was a *Gloria in excelsis* in aid of which the only *ascesis* was via Christian architecture.

In 1839 Earl John had commissioned Pugin, no doubt at the latter's suggestion, to build a church and convent on the precipitous crag overlooking the valley of the Churnet, in which task Pugin probably had a free hand since Dr. Rock left in 1840 to become chaplain to Sir Robert Throckmorton.

The original project was to provide a group of ecclesiastical buildings forming "a complete *Tivoli* of Christian Art". Of these the central feature was the Hospital of St. John, which

was to house "a warden and confrater, both in priest's orders, six chaplains or decayed priests, a sacrist, twelve poor brethren, a schoolmaster, and an unlimited number of poor scholars". The scheme was never fulfilled, but there remains a three-sided quadrangle with school, warden's lodging and minor adjuncts, and the whole is as exquisite as a small Oxford college. The convent, which rises from the framework of a Norman castle, is admirably built, and would seem to have none of the inconveniences of Pugin's convents at Sclerder and Bermondsey. The church, now derelict, is apsidal, with a beautiful highly pitched Mansard-type roof fretted with green and gold; the interior is highly decorated and is fitted with traceried benches, an altar and reredos of alabaster and many encaustic tiles.

The last recorded visit of Pugin to Alton Towers was in July, 1844, when he had a vision of his wife's impending death. During these years he travelled from Ramsgate, where he lived in his Gothic grange, to which a contemporary letter-writer callously referred as his "Inquisition home".

John Talbot, dying in 1852, survived Pugin by but two months. While the latter lay in his own church at Ramsgate his patron was interred beneath the chancel of the church high on Alton rock.

Though it was impossible for society to accept Gothic as a normal mode of expression, Pugin had succeeded in partly clearing the chaos of conflicting Renaissance art-emotions. He was no mere revivalist, no ignored prophet, no Cassandra; for Gothic can never die; it is the embodiment of human aspiration.

TUDOR EDWARDS.

THE NEW FLOWER

"ALL passengers take their seats! The machine for Addis Ababa will leave in five minutes from the left of the runway."

I climbed in with my fellow-passengers and ten minutes later the laden plane had accomplished the hazardous ascent from the 8000-foot-high aerodrome at Asmara and below us was the awesome spectacle of the high plateau of Eritrea falling away in tremendous crags and precipices to the Red Sea, only forty miles away. The machine headed for the south.

Addis Ababa! We should be there in three hours, and the name to my mind brought back all the half-formed desires of many years to visit this strange and still almost unknown Christian country buried in the heart of Africa. Who could escape the

glamour of an Empire whose autocratic ruler claimed descent from Solomon and added to his name the titles of Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, King of Kings and Elect of God? And I could not also forget the literature of the lighter type which I had read on Ethiopia—and from the pen of Mr. Evelyn Waugh—depicting a country behind all its exterior pomp as inconsequential as Ireland and where the humorous and unexpected always happens.

Let it be said at once that Addis Ababa as seen from the air is a disappointing town. The setting is magnificent in the green heath and mountain scenery of the high Ethiopian plateau over 8000 feet above sea level. There are rich and delightful eucalyptus forests planted around the town by the Emperor Menelik when he chose this site to create a new and splendid capital for the Ethiopian Empire—Addis Ababa, or “The New Flower”. But the town itself still consists of a straggling perimeter of tin-roofed shacks giving place in the centre to a few finer buildings, many of them half finished, which the Italians were beginning to erect after the decision of the Fascist Government to make Addis Ababa rather than Asmara the capital of their East African Empire.

The inspection finished at the aerodrome of the imposing visa in Amharic characters on one's passport (surmounted majestically by the classic lion bearing a flag, the symbol of the Ethiopian Empire), one drives over macadam streets for a distance of a mile or so until joining Addis Ababa's most imposing thoroughfare, Churchill Street. There are signs that the Italians intended to make of this wide avenue, which climbs for nearly a mile from the railway station to the centre of the town, something worthy of the approach to the capital of their empire. Imposing blocks of offices have already been erected, but there is much unfinished work including a large cinema, evidently abandoned once the Italians' position in East Africa became insecure. I do not know what Churchill Street was called under the Italian regime. Most of the Ethiopians with characteristic egotism are convinced that they themselves were principally instrumental in driving the invader from their country, and the present name of this street must, I feel, have been given in the first flush of the reoccupation by some enthusiastic British official of O.E.T.A. (Occupied Enemy Territory Administration). Certainly it was the only sign I saw during my visit of any attempt at recognition of the part played by the Imperial forces in the reconquest of the country.

To anyone who may be preparing a post-war guide to African hotels let me say that the hotel at Addis Ababa is by

African standards clean and reasonably comfortable. Under the Italian occupation it formed part, I believe, of a chain of first-class hotels run by an Italian company to cover the principal towns of the new "Empire" and with sister establishments in Asmara, Massawa, Gondar, Dessie, Dire Dawa and Assab. Since then the Addis Ababa hotel has passed into the hands of a Syrian from Khartoum, and I would give it higher praise were it not for the disconcerting vagaries of the water system. During a large part of my stay it rained for an appreciable portion of the day, and yet if one turned on a tap it was a fifty-fifty chance whether any water would emerge. If one was successful the water was invariably cold, and this in a climate where, although it was May and in the Tropics, on account of the altitude the weather was distinctly chilly. Other people did not experience this distressing lack of water, and in a friend's house I was able to obtain a hot bath at any time of the day I wished. The hotel's Ethiopian house-boys are polite and obliging, although conversation is difficult without a knowledge of the tongue which has become their second language, Italian. In only five years of occupation the Italians in fact have imposed their language on the town populations to an extent which by comparison with the average British colony represents a remarkable achievement. In Cyprus, for instance, after over half a century of British occupation, it is the rarest thing to make oneself even understood anywhere in English, and yet in Ethiopia I have heard two of the local inhabitants conversing together in Italian in preference to Amharic. This can partly perhaps be ascribed to the fact that Italian is an easy language to learn, but probably still more so to the mixing propensities of the colonists sent out from Italy who worked side by side—and on more or less equal terms—with Ethiopians in small farms, garages, etc. There appears, strangely enough, to be no animosity on the part of the local inhabitants against the few Italians who still remain in the country, mostly small mechanics and lorry-drivers.

It was on the visit I paid to the British Legation on the afternoon of the day I arrived that I began to realize how first impressions of a place from the air can be deceptive. All the legations are situated some distance outside the town (in the case of the British Legation some four miles), and on the way out I realized how really superb the setting of Addis Ababa is. After passing Menelik Square, with its statue of the great Emperor on horseback, and with the adjoining St. George's Cathedral where the Emperor Haile Selassie was crowned, one traverses long roads bordered by mean little shops. But the ubiquitous eucalyptus trees are on every hand; one winds around green hills and over

little streams, and the ugly squat little buildings blend so well into the surrounding landscape that one is thankful that the hand of man has not been laid more heavily on this lovely spot. The British Legation stands in a magnificent park of its own on the lower slopes of Entoto, the green eminence that dominates Addis Ababa to the north. Approaching the Legation building from the long avenue, with its trees and green fields on either side, one is reminded of some fine English country house in its own park. In subsequent days I visited the American and French Legations, both of which are laid out in surroundings only slightly less magnificent. The policy of having the representatives of foreign powers removed as far as possible from the centre of the capital itself is said to have been originated by Menelik, and unkind tongues have claimed that their distance from the capital has tended to make foreign diplomatic representatives better informed in the arts of tennis and riding than in the intricacies of Ethiopian politics.

Certainly the present internal political situation presents more complex problems than at any time in the past. The country is in its essence feudal and 300 years behind the times, judged by standards of European political development. At the time of the conquest of the country by Italy in 1936 much power was wielded by the local "rases", or chieftains, who, while nominally subject to the Emperor in Addis Ababa, enjoyed considerable independence of their own. Unofficial local taxes were collected in various localities which bore no relation to the official taxation of the Empire, and only such proportion of taxation as the local authorities saw fit to remit found its way eventually into the State coffers at Addis Ababa.

With the restoration of independence in 1941 and the cessation of control by O.E.T.A., Ethiopia has been presented by the British Government with a Constitution on modern parliamentary lines. There is no doubt that the people are not ready for democratic government and that the machinery is creaking badly. The elected representatives of the people meet only to waste time in endless fruitless discussions, for everyone knows that, as far as real power can be said to be wielded by anyone in present-day Ethiopia, it resides not in parliament but in the Emperor himself, and to a lesser extent in individual ministers. The Emperor takes a personal interest in every question of any importance and has in practice the last say as to how it shall be settled. Important cases, also, before the Courts are liable to be judged on the basis of directives from the Gibbi (Royal Palace) rather than on more prosaic grounds of ordinary justice.

The Emperor himself is a man of considerable stature. Regarding himself very much as the father of his people, he commands in his person great respect among the Ethiopian population and in theory the door to the Palace is always open for any of his subjects, even the humblest, to have access to the Imperial Presence. He is, however, bewildered by the present political system and not too fortunate in some of his ministers. The Italians during their occupation made every endeavour to eliminate the intelligentsia class, that is the type of Ethiopian who had enjoyed some education abroad, most probably in France or Switzerland, and whom they regarded as potential, if not actual, enemies of the Fascist regime. After the attempt in Addis Ababa on the life of the Viceroy, Graziani, the remains of the intelligentsia were in fact all but exterminated in a terrible blood-bath. As a result, on the re-establishment of independence, the only men of sufficient education to fill ministerial posts were the handful who had gone into exile with the Emperor, and with such a limited choice it is only natural that there should be misfits. While the Emperor himself is a man who has the interests of Ethiopia very much at heart, the ministerial clique as a body does not present an encouraging spectacle. There is too much striving after purely personal aims, the placing of this or that ministerial protégé in a profitable post or monopoly, with inevitable inefficiency in the whole governmental body and not inconsiderable friction among the various ministries themselves. Every squabble between ministries has to be settled eventually by the Emperor in the knowledge that, however selfish, corrupt or inefficient a minister may be shown to be, his services must be retained as long as there is no one else to fill the vacant post.

Nor was the position any better during the stage, immediately after the reoccupation, when the more important ministries had a British Advisor in attendance. These Advisors were upright and capable men, but they enjoyed no power in themselves, and their advice was rarely taken by the Ethiopian Minister to whom they were attached. They were politely but firmly pushed into the background, and it is not surprising that on the expiry of their contracts they were glad to shake the dust of the country off their feet and seek less humiliating and more constructive work elsewhere. Not one of the former Advisors now remains in the Addis Ababa Government.

The control of finance is one of the deepest mysteries in Ethiopia. No budget is published and the country appears to be run on a hand-to-mouth basis, taxes as they come in being used to meet the most urgent demands at that moment before

the Treasury. This system sometimes has startling results. The educational system is usually the first to suffer from any shortage of funds, and one of the schools in Addis Ababa had recently reached the pass that the teaching staff had not been paid for several months and the school had eventually literally not a penny in hand for ordinary current expenses. In desperation the headmaster appealed to the Emperor. On the following day the Imperial car drew up before the school and Haile Selassie in person descended, bearing parcels of banknotes. The sum of money was a substantial one, all in small notes of five East African shillings, and was handed over to the headmaster by the Emperor in person with apologies for the situation to which the establishment had been reduced.

There is the same story to tell as regards the police. These are a fine-looking body of men with their smart green uniforms and green berets. The Ethiopian from the highlands is a natural soldier, and the British Police Officer who after the British entry into Addis Ababa had the job of creating this new police force told me subsequently that these men represented some of the finest material he had ever seen, but that their future efficiency would depend entirely on whether they were regularly paid. At the time of my visit their pay was stated to be some months already in arrears and I was told that the carrying of a few Abyssinian silver dollars in one's pocket was a safe precaution to extricate one from possible difficult situations with the police. Ethiopian constables were certainly, I noticed, particularly active in patrolling the streets of Addis Ababa after 10 p.m., when the curfew, which was then still in force, began, and I was assured that if through inadvertence my curfew pass had been left at home the bestowal of a dollar or two would quickly put the situation right. I had a good example of the present demoralization of the police when on a road trip to Dessie, 250 miles north of Addis Ababa. At Debra Sina, about half-way, where a barrier has been placed across the road for the purpose of controlling the travelling passes required for any considerable journey in Ethiopia, there was no one in attendance at two o'clock in the afternoon, and after some searching the constable in charge of the barrier was discovered in a neighbouring building in a deplorable and most unpleasant state of drunkenness.

At Debra Sina the scenery must be among some of the finest in the world. The tremendous 20-mile descent from the high main plateau of Ethiopia to the 4000-foot level begins some two or three miles earlier in an unexpectedly dramatic manner. Driving at 10,000 feet above sea level through wild

undulating green countryside, the road is bordered by fields dotted with lovely wildflowers, at this altitude Alpine in their splendour. This is the celebrated Strada della Vittoria of the Italians, the triumphal macadamized highway built by them after the fall of Addis Ababa to provide communications with Asmara, 700 miles away. Suddenly the way is blocked by a mountain mass ahead where the road enters the Mussolini Tunnel, the bombastic entrance flanked by the Roman fasces and surmounted by the name "Mussolini" in huge sculptured letters. But the dramatic moment really arrives on the exit from the tunnel after nearly half a mile of the darkness of Termaber Mountain. One emerges into the daylight expecting to see the same scenery as before, the same green rolling countryside, the same fields of flowers. And what one sees is literally nothing! The road curving out of the tunnel is bounded on the inner side by a wall of rock and on the other side by literal nothingness. This is the abrupt eastern extremity of the high plateau of Ethiopia, and from the side of the road the country falls sheer away into a staggering abyss of crags and precipices. Mountain peaks lie far below in all directions and raising their summits in a vain endeavour to vie with Termaber and their other greater brothers whose precipices border the vertical edge of the plateau. A memorial monument in the best Fascist style stands on the narrow outer shelf of the roadside at this point inscribed with the names of the Italian workmen who lost their lives in the building of this stupendous highway. One could not but feel admiration for the courage and resource of these men in watching how they had overcome the handicaps of nature during the ensuing nineteen miles of this tremendous descent. Where the mountain slope on which the road travels is too abrupt even to leave space for the construction of the sharpest hairpin bend, an arched masonry structure has been built out from the cliff face over the abyss to carry a platform on which the road is just able to turn back hairpin-fashion on to the section of slope below. During the rest of the trip to Dessie the road runs through mountainous country at about 4000 feet, until in the last ten miles it returns abruptly to the 8000-foot level, and the high plateau, by another ascent only slightly less remarkable than that of Debra Sina.

Dessie is situated in a predominantly cereal-growing region now enjoying great prosperity as a result of the policy of the U.K.C.C. (United Kingdom Commercial Corporation) to feed Eritrea and the neighbouring Red Sea countries with Abyssinian cereals in replacement of other overseas supplies cut off by the shipping crisis. I spent an entertaining quarter of an hour in the

cereal market there watching the small farmers, many of whom had walked from far away with their laden donkeys, bargaining before the shops of the Arab grain-buyers for the exchange of their small crop into silver dollars. Although the official money of Ethiopia is now the East African shilling, this currency is hardly accepted outside Addis Ababa itself (where it can be used for payment of taxes, postal business and on the railway), and the greater part of the population still cling to the Maria Thérèse dollar, a huge silver coin as large as the former English five-shilling piece and bearing an effigy of the eighteenth-century Austrian Empress. These coins have been the usual medium of exchange in Ethiopia since the lifetime of the Empress they commemorate, and the dies for striking them have at various times been made available by the Austrian State to private parties wishing to mint their own dollars for purposes of trading in Ethiopia. The Italians during their occupation did their best to impose a forced surrender of dollars for lire to provide them with the bullion they needed so badly, but the M.T. dollar survived all efforts at its suppression and remained the clandestine medium of exchange. Although beautiful as an inkpot top or in a collector's cabinet, it is otherwise an irritating coin. It has no subdivisions, making it awkward for small transactions. Worse still, no higher multiples in the shape of notes exist, or would be accepted if they did. Two or three in the pocket make an appreciable weight, and ten of them (of a total value of only 30s.) might be counted on to disrupt the strongest trouser-buttons. The farmers in the Dessie market got over the difficulty by the simple expedient of loading them on the backs of the donkeys, the latter thus bringing home silver in exchange for grain.

At Dessie, situated though it is already at 8000 feet above sea level, magnificent mountains still tower overhead to the skies, and from the scenic point of view this expedition was the highlight of my trip to Ethiopia. Returned to Addis Ababa, I made several shorter expeditions into the surrounding country, including the ascent of Entoto, the lovely green hill on the lower slopes of which part of the town stands. So steep is the gradient towards the top that with four in the car we could not negotiate it even in bottom gear, and after the resourceful Haile, the chauffeur, had done his best we dismounted and clambered up on foot among the sparse eucalyptus trees for the last quarter-mile to the topmost ridge. A typical Abyssinian church stands there, completely circular and pagoda-like, and as we admired the truly magnificent view below we could hear the chanting of hymns from within, a reminder that, although in the middle of

Africa and in a country surrounded on all sides by barbaric heathen religions, or at the best by peoples professing the faith of Islam, this land has been an oasis of Christianity since as early as the fourth century—at least if an early document, the Chronicle of Axum, is to be believed. The form of religion practised is similar to that of the Coptic Church in Egypt, and, like the latter, follows closely Catholic ritual. The piety and devotion to their Church of the whole population from the Emperor downwards is remarkable, and the Church as a result is in the position of wielding great political as well as religious influence.

On the day before my departure I had the interesting experience of a private audience with Haile Selassie. The approach to the Imperial Presence is impressive. As one enters at one end of the long reception room in the Palace at Addis Ababa the Emperor in uniform stands immobile in silhouette against the windows at the further end, shorter in stature than one would expect from his photographs, but with his finely cut features and air of dignity nevertheless a very royal figure. The audience took place in Amharic, the faithful private secretary, Ato Tafariworg, who accompanied the Emperor into exile in 1936 and whose polished English is quite remarkable, acting as interpreter. The Emperor has a working knowledge of English himself and is even more at home in French, but always prefers to converse with foreign visitors in the vernacular of the country. He is an attentive listener rather than a talker, possibly through the inherent distrust of the foreigner which is deeply rooted in the mind of every Ethiopian, even the highest and most cultured. Indeed, I could not help feeling that this man at any rate had some grounds for such distrust, and as we conversed the spectacle came vividly before my eyes of a pathetic figure some years before in Geneva appealing in vain to the nations of the assembled League to honour their pledges to his country.

Apart from the recently inaugurated air service and a new bus service to Asmara (whose regularity is in inverse ratio to the amount of brigandage on the erstwhile Strada della Vittoria!), the only link between Ethiopia and the outside world is the Chemin de Fer d'Ethiopie, the railway completed by a French company in 1918 to Addis Ababa from Djibouti on the coast in French Somaliland, and it was by this route that I decided to leave. The railway is at present administered in two separate sections, the larger portion which lies in Ethiopian territory being run by the British military authorities, who took it over at the time of the reoccupation, the shorter stretch in French Somaliland remaining still under the management of the original French owners in Djibouti. I had been warned that the journey

would be uncomfortable, and indeed the ravages of war were apparent from the moment I entered the so-called *salon-couchettes* which I had had reserved for me. The compartment was spacious, far larger than the sleeping compartments on an English train, and in pre-war days must have represented tolerably comfortable accommodation. But everything movable had been stripped from it, including electric bulbs and even the upholstery mattresses from the *couchettes*, into which, on the French principle, the seats could be converted at night. On this transformation being attempted, springs gaping into the void appeared on which the traveller who knew the ropes laid the mattress he had taken the precaution of bringing with him. Even in the palmy days of peace the C.F.E. did not run to restaurant cars, meals being taken during halts of appropriate length made at stations on the way. I had my first meal, lunch, at Modjo (after the train for some three hours had been running gently downhill on the first part of the long descent through the highlands) in the little station restaurant kept by a Greek. As the afternoon wore on the bracing chilly air of the plateau was gone, green fields had given place to dusty uninhabited countryside with scrubby bushes, and I successfully caught and slew three bugs which had emerged from behind my seat eager for their afternoon meal. The prospects for the night did not look good; and by the time we reached Awash, where there was a wait of two hours for the evening meal in the station, the early Abyssinian night had descended and the lack of lighting in the compartment became a serious problem. I was eventually able to borrow a paraffin hurricane lamp from a British N.C.O. of the railway staff travelling in one of the other coaches to Dire Dawa, the headquarters of the railway military administration, and seated with this on the floor—because of the bugs, whose activity in the cushions increased with nightfall—I was able to read until bedtime. Liberal spraying with insecticide around my mattress enabled me to get a little sleep on the bare springs of the *couchette* until violent jolting to and fro nearly threw me on the floor. The train was at a standstill in open countryside and the jolting, which continued for at least an hour, was due, I discovered, to its vain efforts to start again. We had run into locusts on the line and the slime from their crushed bodies had made it impossible for the decrepit locomotive to get a grip again on the rails. It was not until a second engine could be sent to our rescue from Awash that we could resume our journey to Dire Dawa, which we reached at midday the following day several hours late.

After a night in the hotel at Dire Dawa and a change of

trains we embarked on the final lap to Djibouti, and as I took my last look at the Abyssinian green, yellow and red tricolour proudly hoisted over the Customs Station at the frontier of French Somaliland I wondered what the future holds for this incredible people, proud, sensitive of interference, rooted in their suspicion of the foreigner and in their belief that Ethiopia's salvation can only lie in playing off one foreign nation unashamedly against another. I thought of the fate of the British Advisors, of recent visits of Ethiopian ministers to the U.S.A., of the American negroes I had seen in the hotel at Addis Ababa brought as schoolmasters for the rising generation of Ethiopia, and of the crowds of American experts and technicians invited to investigate the possibilities of development with American money of the resources of the country. How soon would it be the turn of the Americans, when finding themselves later ousted by someone else, to learn the bitter lesson which the various more experienced European nations interested in Ethiopia have already learnt in turn?

Now is the time when more than ever before Ethiopia needs to abandon this traditional policy and to make permanent friends with one of the Great Powers, preferably Great Britain, who has made many gestures of goodwill to her and who is in the best position geographically to give her protection. Otherwise, with her present weak internal political set-up and in her anomalous position of being the only independent State (except Liberia) left in Africa, she runs a serious danger of being looked at once more by covetous eyes and of again finding herself, as she did at the time of the Italian attack in 1935, completely friendless. The soil in the immense central plateau is exceedingly rich and much of the land is at present, principally through lack of proper internal security, left undeveloped. The climate is cool and healthy for Europeans. And the lack of a strong and organized government in this vast territory of over 300,000 square miles will always furnish a pretext for conquest by surrounding European powers anxious to "protect" their native possessions from disturbances so close at hand. If Ethiopia will not learn this lesson from the events of the recent past she must at least put her own political house in order and create a strong internal government.

But this also she cannot do without enlisting the organizing ability of one of the European Powers. Is it too much to hope that this ancient people will for once put their pride in their pockets and thus take out insurance towards retaining their independence for at least another fifty years?

M. J. A. MACNAMARA.

POLITICAL CATHOLICISM IN GERMANY

IT has recently been reported that a new "Centre Party" has been formed in British Occupied Germany. The inaugural meeting was held in Soest—the same place where, seventy-five years ago, the old German "Centrum" was founded. The implication is obvious: the future is fraught with such dangers for the German Catholics that today, as indeed in 1870, they have to create a political organization of their own—the Church being, in essence as well as in practice, aloof from politics—in order to defend their inalienable rights in the coming political struggles.

That, however, is only one side of the picture. A party cannot exist for any length of time on the basis of a purely defensive programme. It must have a positive policy with which to appeal to the electorate. The history of the old German Centre Party reveals the difficulties attending the formulation of such a positive policy; it also brings to light the fundamental ideas and tendencies which have directed the development of political Catholicism in Germany in the past, and which will certainly influence it again in the future.

Political Catholicism as such goes back, in Germany, much further than 1870; its first manifestations coincide with the beginning of the democratic era. In the Diets of some of the German Federal States, formed after the Wars of Liberation and the Congress of Vienna, the Catholic delegates soon acted together in matters affecting the rights and position of the Church. Faced on the one hand by the anti-confessional, or even anti-religious, tendencies of their liberal colleagues (German Liberalism was inspired by the ideas of the French Revolution and therefore often violently hostile to Christianity and quite devoid of that spirit of tolerance and moderation which characterized most of the English Liberals), and on the other by the power-greediness of absolutist monarchs and princes, the Catholic delegates had much to fight about in order to safeguard the Church's independence. Their position was further complicated by the fact that the Church had been greatly impoverished by the secularization of most of her landed property under Napoleon in 1803; she depended—and still depends—for her upkeep on payments from the states to which that property had been awarded—a position which led to continual strife between the Catholics and other delegates not only in the Diets but also later on in the Reichstag.

On the national plane, political Catholicism came first into evidence in 1848, when the Frankfort Parliament—the upshot

of the revolutionary movements which had sprung up all over Germany, clamouring for the unification of the Reich and for a national parliament—discussed the draft of a German Constitution. Pius-Leagues were formed, which sent mass-petitions to Frankfort, stating the Catholic demands, and the Catholic Delegates formed a Catholic Club, the first instance of a Catholic parliamentary party.

But the Frankfort experiment failed, the national Parliament was dissolved, and in the following period of reaction the Catholics had as little scope for political action as any other group or party. On the other hand, the development of Prussian hegemony, culminating in the victory over Austria in 1866, filled the Catholics with anxiety. When elections were held for the Prussian Diet in 1870 it was clear that the Catholics had to have their own representation.

The programme on which the newly founded Centre Party (so called because the Catholic Delegates had previously had their seats in the middle of the House of the Prussian Diet) was based, is significant: to safeguard the Church's constitutional rights; to preserve the freedom of confessional education; to emphasize the federal character of the new German Reich, which was about to be formed; to press, inside Prussia, for decentralization and provincial self-government; and to promote social legislation.

Equally significant were the political alliances into which the party entered in the new Reichstag: it made common cause with both the Bavarian and Hanoverian particularists, and with the twenty-odd delegates who represented the Poles living under Prussian rule.

Thus, in its programme as well as in its political alignments, the Centre Party was diametrically opposed to the Bismarckian policy. A clash was unavoidable, and it came almost immediately. Using the promulgation of the dogma of papal infallibility as a pretext and as a means to whip up anti-Catholic sentiments among the Liberals and Protestants, Bismarck began the notorious *Kulturkampf*, in which he aimed at the complete elimination of Catholic influence over all forms of education and over public morality. In this struggle, which lasted for nearly eight years, the Centre Party became the Catholics' main weapon of defence; it presented the Chancellor with a solid and quite intractable opposition, and it played, under the ingenious leadership of Windthorst, its hand so cleverly that it eventually forced Bismarck to retreat, to repeal the laws which discriminated against the Catholics, and to alienate the National-Liberals, his staunchest supporters. Instead, he had to come to terms with the Centre Party, which, once it ceased to be in

opposition, was able to form strong majorities with either the Right or the Left Wing Parties and thus to dominate the political scene.

It was precisely at this stage that the inherent shortcomings of the Centre as a confessional party became apparent. The *Kulturkampf* had naturally strengthened its position, drawing almost the whole of the Catholic electorate into its ranks. On the other hand, the confessional character of the party had been strongly emphasized—so much so, in fact, that it had almost come to depend, for a principle of political existence, on the continuance of a state of religious persecution. It had a clearly defined programme only with regard to confessional interests; once these were safeguarded it had little else to stand for. True, there are a number of fundamental ideas about the nature and purpose of the State, about the rights of the individual, and about the social structure of society, which as part of the faith are held by all Catholics in common and are included in the programme of any truly Catholic party. But in the Wilhelman era these basic notions were not, as yet, political issues.

Consequently the Centre Party gradually lost its hold on the Catholic electorate. Political life in Germany became more and more dominated by economic and social questions, the parties acting as representatives of the different economical and social groups and interests. The Centre Party alone did not conform to this pattern; its electorate was held together not by common material interests but by immaterial ideas, by a common creed. In fact, it contained in its ranks groups whose material interests were sharply opposed to one another—a characteristic which made the development of a unified economic policy and social programme even more difficult.

When these shortcomings became apparent, attempts were made to de-confessionalize the party. They failed, owing to the lack of a positive programme, and their only result was the gradual elimination of the clergy from the party bureaucracy. On the other hand, trade unions were formed on an inter-confessional basis, so that in this most important sphere of social organizations a link was established not only with other denominations but also with the parties of the Left.

In Parliament, however, the Centre developed more and more into a middle party—too strong to be ignored by the Government and pushed into opposition, and yet too weak to hold its own. The history of its life in Parliament—both before and after World War I—is thus full of compromises, of uneasy alliances with neighbouring parties right and left, of half-

hearted support for some governments, and of equally half-hearted opposition to others. True, it never betrayed its fundamental principles, and it always stood firm on questions affecting the position of the Church, especially in the field of education. But that alone did not suffice to justify its parliamentary existence; the same services could have been rendered to the body Catholic by a popular "League for the Defence of the Constitution", representing the whole of the Catholic electorate and exercising a certain pressure on all the parties. In fact, the very existence of a Catholic Party tended to weaken the position of the Catholic electorate as a whole: they thought that their Catholic interests were adequately represented by the Centre, and they did not bother to make them respected also by the other parties. In reality, however, the Centre's strength in Parliament was always less than the strength of the Catholics in the country.

During the 'twenties the Centre joined forces mostly with the Social Democrats, in opposition to the Right Wing Parties. It regained some of its political stature during the closing stages of the Weimar Republic, when it fought against the National-Socialists, challenging them on the fundamental issues of individualism and democracy. It was defeated, like all the other democratic parties, and in July 1933, after the passing of the Enabling Act, which conferred upon the Nazis dictatorial powers, it came to an end, together with the Catholic Bavarian People's Party, by "voluntarily" disbanding itself. Both this decision and the proclamation by which it was announced have been severely criticized. There was, however, little else for the Centre to do once the Social Democrats, the strongest party of the democratic bloc, had effaced themselves in the same way. As to the proclamation, it should be noted that the appeal to collaborate with the Nazis, which the Centre addressed to its members, contained one most important qualification: "to collaborate for and in a state-order founded on a legal basis".

This principle of legality henceforth guided the Catholics in their attitude to, and relations with, the new state. They accepted the Concordat of 1934 as a workable, if not wholly satisfactory, new Charter for the position of the Church in the Third Reich. When it became clear, however, that the Nazis did not intend to honour it—nor, indeed, any other legal or moral obligation—the Church went unequivocally into opposition.

This was a new kind of political Catholicism, where the Church as such, under the leadership of a singularly fearless hierarchy, stood up not only against any particular act of injustice and terror to which she herself, or the clergy and faithful, were subjected, but against the whole conception of totalitarian

dictatorship, of racial discrimination, and of nationalist aggressiveness. Already in 1937 the Concordat was superseded—though not legally—as a Charter for the German Catholicism by the papal Encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge*, and ever since the Catholics were in the forefront of the German opposition movements. Together with leading confessional Protestants, Catholic Bishops and laymen took part in the abortive *coup d'état* of July last year—and together with Jews and Pacifists, Democrats and trade unionists, students and generals, thousands of Catholics suffered torture and death at the hands of the Gestapo during nearly ten years of religious persecution.

And now there is a new Centre Party—and to many who remember the inglorious performance of the old one during its later stages the announcement must have come as an anticlimax. The more so, since a hopeful beginning in the direction of a broadly Christian Party, uniting in its ranks all those who on the basis of common Christian principles and of a common respect for the ideas and values of the European tradition, had been drawn together in opposition to the Nazis, shedding their former differences—since such a beginning seemed to have been made by the formation of a “Christian-Democratic Union” as a new party in Berlin. Where then does the new Centre stand, and what shall be its functions?

To answer these questions, the present conditions in Germany must be taken into account. Political parties are as yet only zonal institutions, and the same name may come to have very different meanings in the different zones. The Christian-Democratic Union is as yet important only in Berlin, where it has been created and is still working under quite exceptional circumstances. It is a member of the anti-Fascist bloc, a coalition of the four existing parties, dominated by the Communists. The internal cohesion of this “United Front” is negligible; their co-operation uneasy. But as long as it remains, the Christian Democrats do not possess real independence. Attempts are now being made by the Communists to have “a United Front not only in the Soviet Zone (including Berlin) but in all zones”—which means that they want to extend their predominance, which is based solely on local conditions in Berlin, over the whole of Germany. This development is viewed with anxiety by people in the west of Germany, and the creation of a new Centre Party may be regarded as an attempt to forestall it.

The new party offers to Catholics and Protestants alike (this was stressed in the inaugural addresses) a political organization which is wholly free from outside influence and which, with its centre in the British Zone, stands a better chance of becoming

the true representative of political Christianity in Germany than does the Christian-Democratic Union. Obviously this state of affairs need not last, and there is in fact no reason to suppose that the two parties may not eventually be merged into one, provided that they agree on several points which, to the Catholics at least, are of fundamental importance. *Centre v. CDU*

One of these points is the question of confessional schools, and it seems already now as if the two parties are likely to take up different attitudes. The Centre will undoubtedly stand for the fullest freedom of both Churches to have as many confessional schools as are necessary to meet the demands of the parents. The Christian Democrats seem less determined; faced with the Communist-inspired new education laws for Berlin and the Russian Zone, which not only forbid confessional schools but also ban religious teaching from the state-schools, they have so far protested only against the latter, and it is reliably reported that many of them do in fact hold no particular brief for confessional schools and would not mind to see them finally abolished.

Now, for the Catholics, the freedom of confessional education is a matter on which they will never compromise. Moreover, they have come to regard it as the test of true freedom in all other spheres. A state which forbids, or fights against, confessional education cannot be truly democratic, cannot be based on full respect for the rights of the human person, cannot, of its essence, be Christian. In fact, any state with a religiously mixed population, in which the freedom of confessional education is suppressed, can by inference be classified as totalitarian, and any group clamouring for the abolition or only the restriction of that freedom must be suspected of dictatorial designs. This is the lesson of the past twelve years, and it has been learnt by the German Catholics at terrible expense. They are daily reminded of its fearful truth by what is going on around them—in Germany as well as in some of the neighbouring countries—and they will certainly bear it in mind in the future.

Here, then, would lie the immediate function of the new Centre Party: to fight, within the framework of a new German Democracy, for the fullest recognition of the Church's (and the parents') rights in education, and to test, by its insistence on full freedom for confessional schools, the democratic sincerity of all the other parties.

But it would have to go further. Faced with the danger of new forms of totalitarianism, it would have to work for a structure of society which contains sufficient safeguards against both slow penetration and violent overthrow by any group believing

in this "heresy of the twentieth century". Thus the new Centre Party would become the exponent not only of limited confessional rights and interests but of a positive political philosophy. From this would flow a programme which covers all main aspects of political life. Already now some of the major points of such a programme can be discerned: that national unity in Germany should be based on a federal constitution; that administration should be decentralized, save for national economics (in the widest sense of the term) and foreign policy; that there should be a pluralist structure of society, i.e. that as many public functions as possible should be exercised by organizations which are independent from the Government; that the growth and development of strong and genuine trade unions should be encouraged; and that social justice should be assured by measures based on the spirit, if not the letter, of the magnificent papal Encyclicals.

It is clear that with these points the new Centre Party does in fact revive the best traditions of the old one. There is, however, one essential difference: in the eras of Wilhelm II and of the Weimar Republic the programme of the Centre appeared to represent no more than one among many alternatives, which were all equally well suited to solve the nation's problems within the framework of a liberalist or democratic structure of society. There seemed to be, for the Christian and even for the Catholic, various other parties to which he could transfer his allegiance with equal confidence, provided that his confessional rights were safeguarded. Today, however, this choice is severely limited. Everywhere political ideas and opinions have grown into full-blown ideologies, most of which are mutually exclusive. Whereas formerly most parties were agreed on essentials, and differed only on particulars, today the position is reversed. In choosing his party the Christian will have to look behind the façades of programmes and battle-cries, and inquire into the fundamentals.

This, for the new Centre Party, should be a tremendous advantage. Based on the principles of Christianity, and deeply rooted in the European tradition, it cannot fail to appeal to all sincerely Christian Germans. It would thus outgrow its confessional limitations; and against the background of the other parties it would appear no longer only as the representative of political Catholicism, but as the principal guardian and protagonist of that political tradition which, in its basis, its aims, and its methods, is most unequivocally opposed to totalitarianism—whatever its name, form, and origin.

In this it will not easily be rivalled.

E. M. VERMEHREN.

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